



ART IN THE LIFE OF MANKIND

II. ART IN ANCIENT TIMES:

PREHISTORIC, SUMERIAN, EGYPTIAN,
BABYLONIAN, ASSYRIAN, AND ÆGEAN

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ART IN THE LIFE OF MANKIND

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By

PROFESSOR ALLEN W. SEABY,

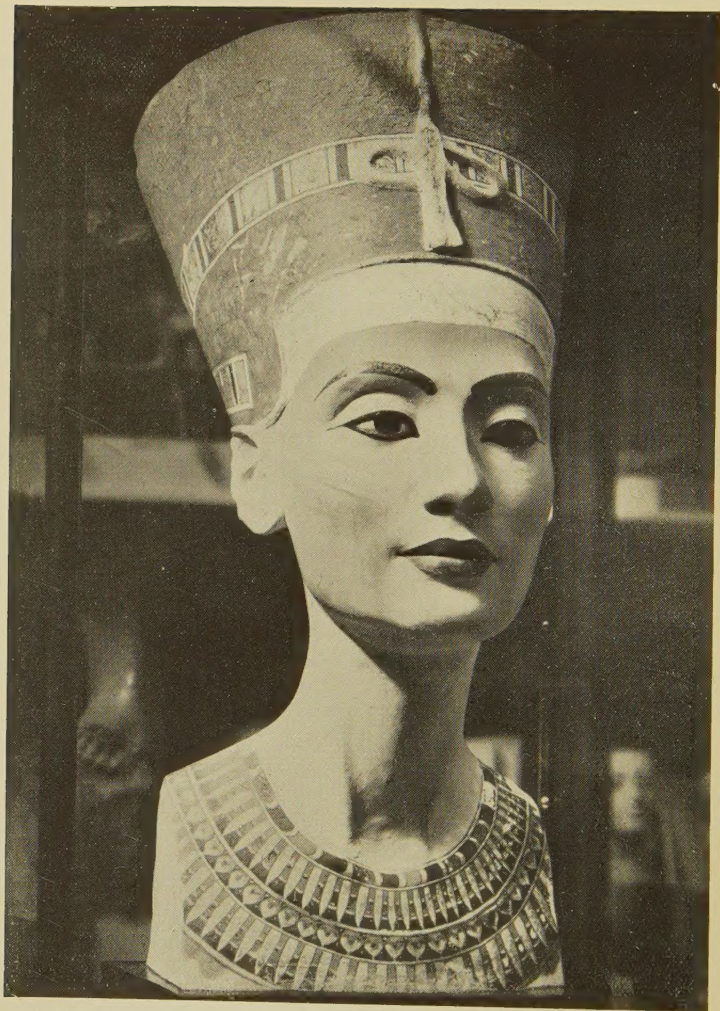
Professor of Fine Art in the University of Reading.

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This bust of Queen Nefretiti bears all the marks of a "speaking" likeness. It should be compared with the profile view of another head of the same queen, shewn in fig. 71.

Berlin Museum

From a replica in British Museum

ART IN THE LIFE OF MANKIND

A SURVEY OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES

By

ALLEN W. SEABY

Professor of Fine Art in the University
of Reading

Author of "Drawing for Art Students and Illustrators,"
"The Roman Alphabet and Its Derivatives"

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MOSTLY BY THE AUTHOR

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PREFACE

WHEN one considers the vast and still rapidly-growing literature concerning the ancient past, the researches of archæologists in various parts of the world, digging deeply and sifting the earth with a fine mesh to make it reveal its treasures, every exploration being rounded off with a careful record, the attempt, not indeed to compress all the recent results, but even to state the salient facts about ancient art within the compass of a small volume, may seem a somewhat foolhardy enterprise. One early civilisation alone—Egypt—has yielded and still is yielding an enormous mass of material for the student to digest, of great art interest, apart from records dealing with its history and literature. The discovery, for instance, of the tomb of Tutankhamen has given us a mental picture of the varied needs of the life of the XVIIIth dynasty, and has thus filled in the outlines of our previous knowledge.

While this accumulation of riches (in more than one sense), of which the finds at Ur in Mesopotamia are a recent example, makes it difficult to omit where all is interesting and significant, it is the more necessary to give young students a picture of the past, if only in "outline." The following pages attempt to tell the story of man's achievements in what we have agreed to call "art," that is in architecture, sculpture, painting and the "decorative arts"; it is an attempt to give the whole in perspective—putting first things first—and omitting, necessarily, much that might well be told.

The book has been written for those who have not had the time or arrived at the age to delve deeply into the history of art. Those more advanced will, it is hoped, glance indulgently over the maps and attempts to put into graphic form the great epochs of early art. In them will be found rash generalisations, which, however, may serve to bridge gaps and stimulate "long views."

The pen drawings, some of which were made on the spot, while lacking the detailed accuracy of the photograph, yet, because they are man-, and not machine-made, serve to direct attention to important facts, and divert it from non-essentials, in a way impossible to the camera. Indeed, the bias of the photograph may amount to more than the imperfections of the draughtsman. The camera distorts form, alters colour, and exaggerates depth or distance; the camera-man, too, is apt to seek a view which gives misleading, although picturesque, results. For example, photographs of the group of pyramids at Giza, generally portray the great tombs as if they lay far out in the desert, whereas they are and always have been, as close to cultivation and human habitation as it was possible for them to be.

I have to thank the authorities of the British Museum for permission to make drawings and take photographs. My thanks are also due to Prof. Garstang for allowing me to reproduce two of his photographs of Hittite sculpture, Mr. B. Kurtz, of Philadelphia, for some photographs of Egyptian work, Miss J. Hudleston for views in Brittany; to Sir W. Flinders Petrie for allowing me to make a sketch from a photographic block, and to Editions Albert Morancé, Paris, for Plate XI₂, from "L'Architecture et la Decoration dans L'Ancienne Egypte"; Plate XII from "L'Architecture et la Decoration dans L'Ancienne Egypte (Ramessides et Saïtes)," Plate XIII₁, from L'Architecture et la Decoration dans L'Ancienne Egypte (Memphites et Thebans)." Plates IV₂, VII, IX₂, and XIV₂ are from Mr. H. Felton's collection of photographs of Egypt.

Lastly, I must thank Mr. H. Batsford for his whole-hearted co-operation and the help he has given in the production of this book in all stages.

ALLEN W. SEABY.

January, 1928.

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INTRODUCTION

No one now attempts to maintain that man is wholly material and utilitarian, and even the lower grades in modern civilisation reveal a strong and sometimes pathetic, if often misdirected, impulse to escape from the tyranny of eating, drinking, and sleeping. Man is a spiritual being, and art is or should be an integral and primary feature of his culture, ranking with literature, music, and science. Scarce any people, even the humblest and most primitive, are without some manifestation of creative artistic feeling; often their productions take high rank, such as the basketry and blankets of the American Indians, or the elaborate Maori woodcraft. Art is always inextricably interwoven with the fabric of the life of a modern civilised country; in the form of pictorial reproductions it stares from most of what is read; it is connected, often in a debased and unpleasant fashion, with innumerable objects and utensils essential in our homes.

The history of art throws a light on our environment, and makes clear much which would otherwise be unintelligible. The house we live in is full of the vestiges of the past. The narrow skirting board round the room is all that is left to us of the wall-panelling of the Tudors; the "lambs-tail" moulding of the sash-bars of the windows is a degenerate descendant of the mediæval stone mullion; the wall paper is a modern substitute for figured tapestry or wall painting. Outside the house, we cannot walk down the street without a host of details calling to us of their past. The nearest church, added to from century to century, is a whole history of England. The porch of an 18th century house, with its columns and entablature, tells of the revival of interest in the art of Greece and Rome, brought about by the excavation of Pompeii, and thus, at second or third hand, takes us back to the classic era. Without some knowledge of the past, these familiar forms mean nothing and the unin-

structed eye passes unheeding. Thus through ignorance the mind may not reach its full development for want of ideas to feed upon. The evil is negative, but, on the other hand, the active manifestations of ignorance may be deadly, and its disasters irretrievable. The discovery of the fragments of a now famous skull, a few years ago, has set anatomists measuring, fitting and guessing, ever since, without final agreement. Yet the skull was found practically whole by the workmen set to dig a spit of gravel, with instructions to set aside anything of interest; but coming upon a smooth, round object which they did not understand, they could think of nothing better than to set it up during their lunch-hour as a target! This was ignorance concerning nature; it is easy to find an instance where art was the sufferer. During the war, a detachment of our troops in Palestine occupied a small, ancient church which had just been vacated by the Turks. It was a beautiful building, the interior decorated with how much of loving work, carving and interlaced ornament, capitals suggesting foliage waved by the wind and panels containing heraldic-like figures. The Turks, knowing its sacred character and reverencing its purpose, had left it without doing the slightest damage: after a week of our occupation it was a wreck. Our brave young Tommies, perhaps not recognising what its eastern type of work stood for, and with the wilful destructiveness of ignorance and high spirits combined, had mutilated and spoiled all the delicate art which was concentrated in the little edifice.

How is this ignorance to be dissipated? Certainly schools and colleges do concern themselves with art, although often only in the form of exercises in "drawing." Art is not seldom looked upon as a mere "background," very desirable as a part of education, although not essential, and necessarily omitted owing to the pressure of other studies. A good background, however, is as important in education as in a picture. Looking at the panorama of history, for example, one sees the background of art ever revealing itself. That Charlemagne brought about a uniformity in hand-writing in the ecclesiastical courts of his wide realm, bears witness both to the firmness of his government and his attention to detail. And the effect of a decree issued for immediate convenience,

has persisted to the present day, for to it we owe the forms of the "lower-case" or small letters, such as are used on this page. The decree was only an episode in history, but has proved of immense importance to all that side of art which has to do with lettering.

To gain an intelligent understanding of what art is and what place it can fill in daily life at the present time, it is necessary to review, though very briefly, for reasons of space, something of its accomplishments throughout the ages, for when it can be seen how it has affected human life in the great periods of civilisation, we shall have prepared a base on which to stand for the appreciation and realisation of the nature of art and its possibilities in modern human life.

The art of humanity, whether pictorial or constructive, is, except in the prehistoric or earliest phases, always influenced and helped by the work of other contemporary countries and of the past, and hence it is necessary to study art historically to obtain a right perspective, to be able to judge and enjoy the art of our own country and of comparatively modern times. Attempts to dissociate art productions from the influence and tradition of the great styles of historical times have always ended in futility or disaster, and the influence of ancient work is still to be reckoned with, as may be seen by the recent revival of Chinese and Egyptian forms in textiles and other decorative work.

Recent American reviews of an art history spoke in depreciation of a knowledge of ancient expressions of art, which the writers evidently regard as something archaeological, academic, and entirely dissociated from modern art and the place it may occupy in present day life. Such an attitude is superficial and ill-founded, for art is a ceaseless expression of the human spirit, and must always, even at the present day, be unfailingly influenced by the work of preceding civilisations, which stretch back in a long continuous chain. It is impossible to start at an arbitrary point in the study of what humanity has produced in art, just as it is unsound to ignore mankind's efforts and achievements before the Norman conquest. Even the Americans are realising that it is parochial to consider that history began with the arrival of Columbus in 1453! A recent corre-

spondence in the *Times* convinces that some authorities are keenly aware of both the neglect and the importance of the study of art history as a vital factor in collateral education. Mr. F. J. E. Hendy of Oxford points out the one-sidedness of educational tradition: "it has failed in the larger half of its task if it has ignored those more direct manifestations of the human spirit which spring from something deeper than intelligence, which we call art—including, of course, all poetry and all literature. It has certainly failed to produce, in its pupils, any adequate conception of the significance of art as an element in civilisation. . . . Art can never flourish in a hopelessly philistine society. Unless the rising generations are better equipped than their forefathers, how is it possible to hope for any improvement in public taste, or any check to the appalling devastation of beauty, natural or artificial, which appears to be inseparable from modern life?"

Miss Spiller considers a knowledge of the methods used in the applied arts of equal importance with the expression of man's thought in literature—the vehicle of the cultured few—whereas handicrafts, now abominably prostituted, were the articulate medium of the illiterate many. Looking at the question from another angle, it can be seen that the study of art develops a spirit much akin to that of patriotism. Our great cathedrals and other monuments are all part of our country's past, and they should be known and treasured accordingly. They belong to us in a very real sense, although we may not have in our possession a single masterpiece. There can be no possession without appreciation, and a millionaire whose dining room is hung, say, with Corots, and who knows nothing of them save that they cost him "a lot of money," cannot be said to possess them, for he is incapable of the one thing possible to a possessor of works of art, he cannot see them for the things of beauty they are.

In Holland, where for various reasons, painting is her chief glory, the names of her great painters are household words. Every town has its gallery of masterpieces; the school children are taken there and made acquainted at first hand with the works of their great painters. In consequence, the Dutch know intimately all their painters, and have perhaps the most cultured taste of any people in the world.

Incidentally they are also the most consciously patriotic. In Britain our young people can leave school, having matri-culated in many cases, but quite ignorant of architecture, and not knowing even the names of our great painters and art workers. It follows that here are perhaps the ugliest houses in the world, houses which though full of rubbish do not contain a single object worthy of being called a work of art.

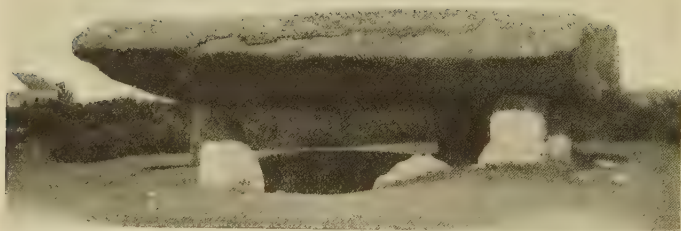
Instead of being ignored as a mere background, art should be acknowledged as an integral part of education. We may look forward to the day when art study will occupy a prominent place in the curriculum of every school, college and university. The late Professor Rayleigh once wrote :

“There is no considerable kind of human activity involving a wide range and diversity of material, which is not a fit subject for university study.”

And this definition covers art study exactly. Compare the amount of reading for a degree in letters or science, occupying three or four years, with a training in art, where the student, besides a constant effort to acquire technical skill, undertakes a considerable amount of reading and inquiry into methods and processes, the study of the historic periods, and of subsidiary subjects as anatomy, lettering and design, spread over a period of from five to seven years. One wonders why professors and vice-chancellors are blind to the truth that such a course of study deserves to be called education ; that a student may be educated through art.

It is interesting to note that the history of art has been included, under the head of Drawing, in the School Certificate Examination, taken under the regulations of the Oxford Local Examinations. This is an encouraging sign, and should give art a practical value in the eyes of young students, even if only for the purpose of counting marks. A difficulty arises here, however, for as set down in the syllabus, the history of art is divided into alternative fragments, one being the study of the Decorated period of Architecture in England, another a knowledge of the main schools of painting, with Raphael as the first name. This arbitrary division, at such an early stage in the student's career, is somewhat unfortunate.

If we are to understand the evolution of art in the life of mankind we shall not make much progress by limiting ourselves to set periods ; before specialisation can begin profitably there must have been broad generalisations, some attention directed to remote times. English architecture did not spring forth fully fledged, without a past ; the methods of building and the forms used, if we examine them, take us back through the dark ages to Rome and thence to Greece, which in its turn derived its art from the Ægean, Egypt and the East. Nor did Italian painting begin with Raphael or Bellini ; even its early manifestations, connected with the names of Giotto and Duccio, have their roots in Byzantine art, which, with an Eastern bias owed everything to Greece. Greek painting, again, may have sprung from Ægean and other early types of art. Thus the art written of in this volume, although sometimes looked upon scornfully as “ancient” (as if ancient meant old-fashioned), is of the utmost importance, for it gives us, so far as we can trace them, the beginnings, and enables us to understand how the later manifestations evolved, as we have already pointed out. Again, it should be realized that in these ancient civilisations craftsmanship sometimes reached such a high standard, as for instance the superb technique of Egyptian jewellery or Greek masonry, that we moderns cannot compete with it. The work of the ancient past may be studied as a stimulus for the lessons in good workmanship it affords.



A DOLMEN OR "TABLE" GRAVE, IN BRITTANY



PART OF THE GREAT FIELD OF CARNAC, IN BRITTANY

EARLIEST ART

How did art arise and what were its beginnings? Art was born, when man first felt the need of tools for cutting and scraping, and fashioned them from the stones he picked up. It is true that the implements of the eolithic or earliest stone age are so primitive that many archæologists disbelieve in them, and assert that natural causes are sufficient to account for the marks and fractures seen upon them. The implements of the following palæolithic or old stone age, still very remote in time, reveal a sense of form and regard for symmetry; the *shape* of the tool was considered as well as its efficiency; perhaps the utility and the form were one in the mind of the maker. The hand-axe or pick of Chelles with its fine outline and bold flaking suggests a strength of will and decision of eye which compel our admiration (Fig. 1), and when we remember the great, powerful jaw of the man of Mauer near



FIG. 1. Hand-axe or pick of Chelles. Compare the irregular, bold flaking with that of the implements in Fig. 3 and Fig. 44.

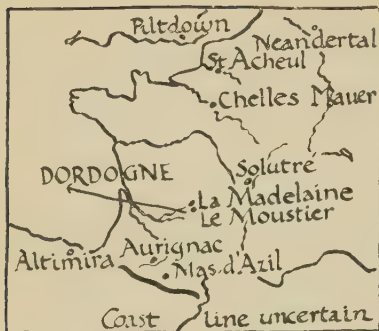


FIG. 2. The type stations of early man in Europe.

Heidelberg, we realise that our estimate of his character from his handiwork may well be correct. In the next period, that of St. Acheul, the tools are worked with more refinement, although with some loss of strength; in the Mousterian age, man was content, for the most part, to use the flakes or chips struck from a core, and dressed them on one side only.

Both Acheuleans and Mousterians, however, may have worked under difficulties, for the climate was becoming very cold as the third ice age descended upon northern Europe.

With the Aurignacian age we find evidence of another race of men, more modern in type, of great intelligence and able to adapt themselves to their environment. Their varied needs are revealed by the many new forms of implements found. They made scrapers, graters and points in great variety, reworking the edges to give them strength. The people of Solutré carried the technique of fabricating flint implements to a still higher level. Their leaf-shaped knives or spear-heads are beautifully even in contour, and marvellously thin. The retouching is not confined to the edge, as in the case of the earlier implements, but extends over the surface, from which thin scales were removed evenly (Fig. 3). This fine work tells us that, thus early, man was as sure of eye and clever with his hands, as at any period later; the flint weapon of Solutré marks a stage



FIG. 3. Implement or weapon of Solutré. Its thinness can be seen from the side-view.

in human achievement.

The people of this age, the later palæolithic, have left, however, other evidences of their keenness of eye and their skill. In the caves of the Dordogne and the Pyrenees have been found those astonishing paintings of animals, which reveal the other side of man's



FIG. 4. A bison in its death-throes, not leaping, as sometimes stated.

nature, the imaginative, the creative. The representation of bison and other animals are life-like in their proportions, structure and movement (Fig. 4). No doubt the work had its utilitarian side; it was a kind of magic to ensure the provision of food. To-day, some Australian tribes practise a ritual, part of which consists in making a diagram of an emu on the ground. The Aurignacians sometimes carried clay into the recesses of a cave and modelled animals on the floor (Fig. 5). Some of these are marked as if by spear-thrusts. The hunter craved for power over the creatures he used as food, but the spirit and movement of the drawings make it clear that he delighted in expressing himself. His statuettes of the mother goddess, in stone or ivory, convey much the same idea, the desire for fertility and abundance.



FIG. 5. Models in clay of bison on the floor of a cave.

These figures, although gross in form, are constructed with an intelligence and freedom which we shall not find again in Europe for thousands of years.

The Magdalenians, so called from their type station of La Madelaine, forced by the colder climate to a life much like that of the modern Eskimos, used bone as the chief material for tools and weapons. The engravings on bone, as well as the paintings, reveal a knowledge of their subjects amounting almost to a passion for animals, and reveal too, the strength of their impulse towards art, and the tenacity which they displayed in carrying out the work with the primitive implements at their command. They had no such seductive materials as paper and pencil, yet in spite of their



FIG. 6. Bone carving executed with stone tools.

difficulties, they, or the best of them, for ability varied as in our own day, achieved something approaching greatness in art.

It may be objected that all this animal work is mere memorising; art is more than copying or reproducing nature. Some of the carvings, however, make it clear that these folk had imagination. The natural knobs and hollows of the handle of the bone dagger or piercer have suggested to the artist a reindeer on bent forelegs, its head raised and antlers lying back on its neck (Fig. 6). This, and other work of the sort, make it clear that art in its complete sense was present then. Man had an eye for the shapes of things and that inward vision which we call imagination. In south-east Spain, where the later period of the old stone age is represented by the Capsian culture (so called from Gapsa or Gabes in Tunis), we find real compositions or pictures. The animals are drawn with more regard for their structure than man, who, although full of movement and animation is a mere symbol. (Fig. 7.)



HITTITE ROCK SCULPTURE

The processional character of the work should be noted. This, and the hanging folds of the garments, seem to foreshadow some phases of Greek art

Before art could develop beyond this stage, there had to be a consciousness of further needs. So far man had made nothing new. He took natural things such as stones, sticks and bones and put them to his service. His clothing must have consisted of skins and furs, and here his ability procured him eyed needles from slivers of bone, as fine as the iron ones of the middle ages, and no doubt his women sewed as well and looked as smart as did the Eskimo girl



FIG. 7. Hunting scene (after Obermaier).

in the film of "Nanook." At Predmost in Moravia, where are many remains, a bone fastening for a cloak has been found. It is evident that the hunters were not without a love of decoration, for in the French caves have been found necklaces of shells, and bone implements ornamented with patterns (Fig. 8).

Magdalenian man was certainly not without inventive powers, as is shewn by the variety of his stone tools. He

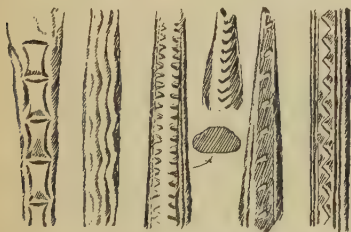


FIG. 8. Patterns on bone, made with stone tools.

made clever weapons, and barbed harpoons of bone, and had worked out an invention for hurling darts—a throwing stick—which he carved elaborately, thus displaying his pride in it. There are some small flint points of Solutrean type which *may* be arrow-heads, and we know that the Capsians, perhaps in a

later phase, had the bow (Fig. 7).

There were limits, however, imposed upon the man of the old stone age by his circumstances and traditions. He was primarily a hunter, and he had to secure his "daily bread"

in the form of a constant supply of meat. This concentration on the chase narrowed his outlook. The largest thing he would be called upon to construct, would be a snare or trap for big game. There is nothing to tell us that he was acquainted with the *right angle*, the very symbol of a civilised life, so constantly is it required in constructions with wood and brick. Nor does he seem to have been acquainted with pottery, although what is thought to be a lamp, carved from stone, has been found.

Before the Magdalenian era had closed, in south-east Europe, in Egypt and western Asia there were people living quite another kind of life, dwelling in towns and cities. They, too, used flakes of flints for knives, and in addition, they had learned to make celts or axes of the same material, which were hafted to handles. From basketry and netting, arts no doubt known to the hunters from the earliest times, they had developed the art of weaving, for their spinning whorls are found (although sometimes their beads have been mistaken for these), and the heavier loom-weights, which kept the warp-threads hanging straight and taut. They had pottery and used the bow and arrow. Of the origins of agriculture little is known, but it is certain that these folk cultivated a primitive form of wheat called emmer (*Triticum dicoccum*. Schub) together with barley.

Agriculture seems to have been the first step towards civilisation, even though the old hunting habits still survived, as they do everywhere to this day in some form or another. When the harvest had been reaped with sickles fitted with flint teeth, and folk had stored their grain in jars, they no longer felt that ever present fear of hunger experienced by the hunters, and they could bend their minds to other tasks. Living in communities ensured co-operative effort; walls could be erected, ditches cut and dykes built for irrigation, and shrines set up in honour of the mother goddess whom we call Nature. Agriculture, too, made it unnecessary for all to undertake the same tasks; the workers specialised, each man working at his own craft.

Where this busy, ordered life began, it is difficult to say. At Anau in Russian Turkestan are to be seen "kurgans" or ancient city mounds consisting of the rubbish of successive

ages, and at the very bottom of one of them was discovered the remains of a people who had no domesticated animals ; but they sowed wheat and barley, lived in brick houses, made excellent pottery, and *knew* of metal in the form of copper and lead, although they had not as yet used it for tools. Copper and lead ores are widely distributed, from Cornwall to China, and the pure metal might have been obtained accidentally, owing to fragments of ore finding their way into a glowing hearth fire. Elsewhere have been discovered the remains of people living apparently in comfort without metal, in Crete and Egypt for example. Somewhat later these folk, or their arts had penetrated right across Europe. Someone may ask whether people without metal can be called civilised, can be considered as other than mere savages. To this it may be replied that civilisation does not consist only in railways, great iron ships, electricity and " wireless." These are modern conveniences which were unknown within the memory of old folk still living. When we find traces of people dwelling in communities, working together for common ends, and using various materials as stone, clay, ivory and precious stones to produce finely shaped objects of use or ornament, we cannot deny that such people were civilised, although they may not have had metal tools. After all, a flake of flint has an edge as sharp as that of a metal knife, and long after metal was known, people went on using stone tools. The great pillars of Stonehenge were squared, smoothed, socketed, dowelled and set up by folk who were without metal, while ages before that, the enormous blocks from the quarries of Egypt were dressed largely by means of stone mauls. The Maya temples and pyramids of Lubaantun and elsewhere in the peninsula of Yucatan, dating from about 300 B.C., seem to have been built by a stone-using people.

It has already been pointed out that people in the east had reached the agricultural stage, while in Europe the hunting folk were still getting a living by means of their harpoons and spears. We might liken the case to a stone flung into a pool, the centre of disturbance marking the beginnings of culture, while the further out the rings, the later and less complete were its manifestations (Fig. 9). From the positions of the earliest known civilisations, all near the circumference

of the inner circle, it might be inferred that the common source was some spot south of the Caucasus; but the political condition of that district has not as yet allowed of careful investigation. In regard to Europe, it was believed, until recently, that a gulf or hiatus divided the hunting from the farming periods, but the gap has to some extent been bridged. There was an "in-between" stage which, how-



FIG. 9. Anau is perhaps some thousands of years later.

ever, did not form a true transition, for it partook mostly of the old hunting mode of life, although it may have borrowed a little from the agriculturists. This period is sometimes called the epipalæolithic; another term is "mesolithic," indicating its intermediate position between the older and the newer ways of living.

We may suppose that Magdalenian art faded away because the hunters, specialised in their habits to withstand extreme cold, could no longer maintain their culture, when the climate became milder with the passing of the last glacial epoch. The great icecaps began to melt, the storm-centres

shifted, rivers overflowed and low lying areas were flooded. The reindeer departed, and with it went the chief supply of food, and material for tools and weapons. The dry land became densely covered with forests which moved slowly but surely northward like a mighty army, for woods can move in other ways than that described in "Macbeth." The hunters, ill equipped for felling trees, were pushed before them until the water's edge was reached (Fig. 10). So,



FIG. 10.

here and there, by river, lake or shore, lived people called Azilians from their type site, the cave of Mas d'Azil, still hunting and fishing much as did the Magdalenians, except that the brilliant cave art seems to have disappeared. The Azilian culture lasted a long time, but there is little which calls for notice, except the pebbles painted with signs of which the use or meaning is uncertain, although some of them seem to represent the human form and others may stand for numbers (Fig. 10). During this period, people, perhaps of the same race, were living on the shores of a great fresh-water lake occupying what is now the Baltic. We call it the Ancyclus lake after a little shell-fish living in its waters.

These people of Maglemose (the type station of the culture), were, like the Azilians, fishers, trappers and hunters, and carried on the old Magdalenian industry of fashioning implements from bone. They lived on rafts or platforms, moored by the shore. They certainly drew animals, but not so well as did the Magdalenians. When the coast of Scandinavia had sunk somewhat, and the sea again flowed into the Baltic, there was a corresponding change in the conditions. People, still living by the shore, now fed largely on shell-fish, and the heaps of discarded shells at their back doors grew in time to enormous dimensions, say, half-a-mile long and many yards wide. Such mounds are still to be seen on the coast of Denmark, and elsewhere round the Baltic. These "kitchen-middens," as the banks of oyster, mussel, cockle and winkle-shells are called must have taken a long time in the making. This is sometimes called the Littorina period, and the Baltic the Littorina Sea from the abundance of winkles at this time. Like the Azilians and Maglemose folk, the "midden" people were purely food gatherers and hunters. No signs of agriculture and no polished celts appear except in the uppermost levels of the shell-heaps. At some time during their culture they, however, had received or domesticated the dog, and had learned to make rough pottery. Among their implements appears a roughly-chipped little axe called a tranchet, which was fixed in a haft of deer-horn, a tool unknown to the cave-dwellers (Fig. 11). The tranchets, pottery and perhaps the dog, suggest that these "beach combers" had somehow got into touch with settlers who were moving across Europe, possibly by way of the Danube, looking for suitable areas for grazing and tillage. Elsewhere, in Britain, the north coast of France and at Mugem on the Tagus, the mounds of shells testify that similar settlements once existed, although, not all at the same time, or with the same industries.

We noticed that the fine art of the Magdalenians disappeared at the commencement of the long period we have been describing, between the old and the newer stone cultures in Europe. The Azilians and the Maglemose folk had somehow lost touch with art, although there are some engravings of animals on rocks in Scandinavia which may be

Azilian. The "midden" peoples may have been too miserable or too lazy to care for art, while, on the other hand, the early lake dwellers of Switzerland and the farmers of the Danube, were, perhaps, too busy with their tillage and care of domestic animals to bother about drawing and painting, although they had *arts*, as weaving and pottery, from the first.

There came a time when the neolithic settlers having occupied Europe crossed into Britain. They chose the grassy down-

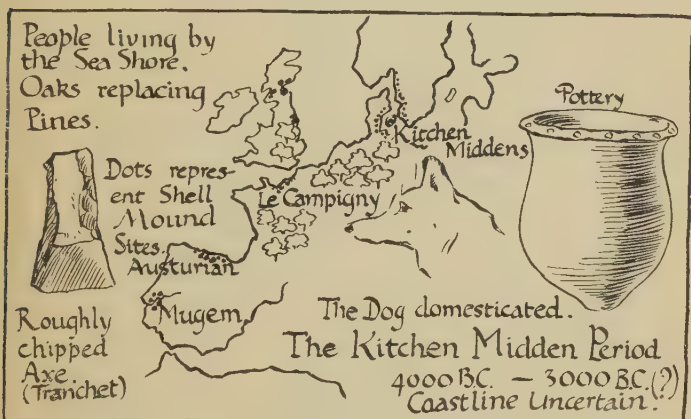


FIG. II.

lands, for there were swamps in the low levels and wolves in the forests. Like other emigrants they were perhaps among the poorest of their kind, although they may have seen a few metal tools, for some think that the polished stone tool of the late neolithic period is an attempt to imitate the smoothness of metal. There is a great sandstone slab in the British Museum marked with grooves in which the tools have been rubbed down. As a matter of fact, making tools by grinding, although slower, is easier than flaking, and with some kinds of stone, which do not flake easily, grinding is the only possible method. These new people in Britain had brought with them, poor as their equipment may have been, something

which affected profoundly the art and thought of future generations. This was an *idea*, an impulse which was to leave its mark on hill-top and headland not only in Europe, but throughout the Indian Ocean, and as some think, all over the New World. This impulse manifested itself in its concern for the life beyond the grave, the disposal of the body, developing into a ritual of burial. The cave dwellers evidently believed in an existence after death. Even the Neandertal man, brutish creature as he must have looked, buried his dead below the floor of his cave, while the



FIG. 12.

A port-hole entrance in a long-barrow.

later palæolithic man painted the corpse with ochre, and placed a flint tool by the hand.

At some period, say about 3000 B.C., this belief in the after-life developed to such an extent, that at this distance of time, it seems as if the building of their tombs must have occupied most of the thought and energies of the rulers, who had evidently the co-operation or obedience of their subjects. Right across the old

world and even the new, stretches a chain of great tombs and monuments, mostly on or near the coast, the result of this impulse to keep the dead safe for eternity. How this "megalithic" culture, this art of building with great stones was carried round the world would be hard to say. The Spanish peninsula has many megalithic tombs, and from thence the practice seems to have been carried in two directions, one northwards to France, the British Isles and Scandinavia, the other eastwards to the isles of the Mediterranean; but some would see the impulse starting from Egypt.

In Britain are the long-barrows of Wilts and the west country. The tomb with its passage, was lined and roofed with flat stones and the whole covered with soil, forming a great mound, which was encircled by a railing of upright stones, a magnificent monument as Mr. T. D. Kendrick calls it, considering the meagre resources of the builders. Nothing in the way of treasure has been found within the long-

barrows, the " graves-goods " consisting mainly of roughly-made jars and leaf-shaped arrow tips. Sometimes the tomb has a " port-hole " entrance—a round hole cut in the upright slab or slabs which closed the chamber (Fig. 12). This idea of making a secure refuge for the dead, developed to a remarkable degree in Egypt, as we shall see. In the " mastaba " or chapel over the grave was placed a false door for the use of the dead man's spirit, and it may be that the

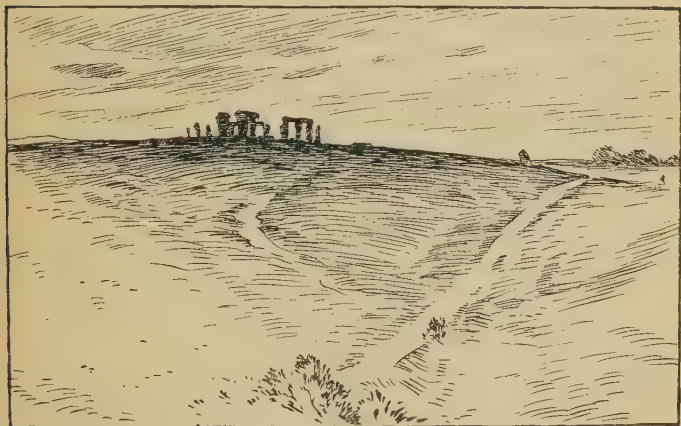


FIG. 13. The situation of Stonehenge.

port-hole was intended to serve the same purpose. But the connexion between the Egyptian mastabas and the port-hole tombs is difficult to prove, although it is an attractive theory.

Often the grave takes the form of a " dolmen," a great flat stone resting like a table on upright stones and forming a chamber, which perhaps was once covered over with earth (Plate II). Seemingly all great stones came to be revered, and there are many " menhirs " or tall stones set up, notably in France, reminding us of the Egyptian obelisks. At Carnac, in Brittany, a whole field is occupied by rough monoliths in long lines (Plate II), and there is a great circle at Avebury. In Malta are impressive remains.

Stonehenge represents, in Britain, this megalithic work, that is building with great stones, in its latest and most architectural form (Fig. 13). To us it is amazing that these great stones, as already remarked, should have been set up and the foreign "stones" within the circle brought from as far away as Pembrokeshire by a people who had only stone tools. But no copper or bronze implements have been found there, only stone hammers and deer horn picks.

This brilliant period of the British neolithic, the period of



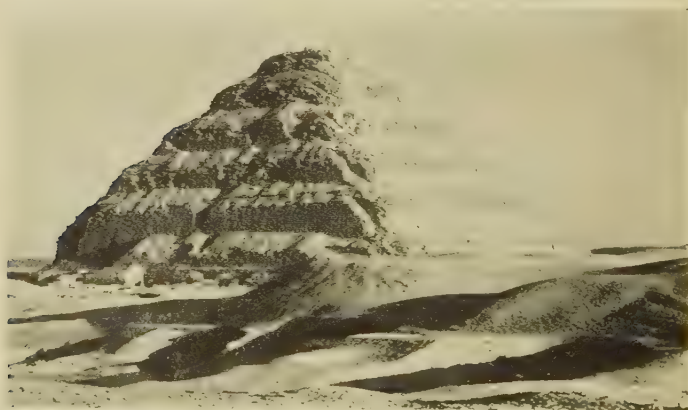
FIG. 14.

the great burial mounds and the circles of Avebury and Stonehenge, seems to be a transition stage of not very long duration, compared with the thousands of years occupied by the stagnant periods of the epi-palæolithic raft-dwellers, and the shell-fish eaters. Even before the long-barrow men had ceased to throw up their mounds on the skyline, newcomers had entered the land. A restless tribe, apparently from Spain, had long been on the move. We call them the "beaker folk," from their beakers or "drinking cups," which in their shapes and ornamentation imitated baskets of the tough, wiry esparto grass of Spain and north Africa (Fig. 14). These people knew something of metal, for they had a few metal knives or daggers, and plain celts. From



PART OF THE SITE OF PERSEPOLIS

The edge of the platform can be seen. The tall columns are all that is left of the Great Hall of Xerxes (see Plate V.)



THE STEPPED PYRAMID OF SAKKARA

Spain, these folk wandered through France, reached the Danube, and settled in central Europe. Some of them went down the Rhine and crossed to Scandinavia and Britain (Fig. 14). The small, long-headed peoples were no match for these broad-headed, heavily built warriors, who dominated all the neolithic peoples they encountered. They brought with them their custom of building round barrows in which they placed jars or urns containing the ashes of their dead, and sometimes a beaker and metal knife and celt.

All round the great circle of Stonehenge are many round barrows of this early Bronze age, so that some think that Stonehenge was the work, after all, of the beaker folk, while others imagine that the newcomers, struck by the magnificence of this "temple," desired to be buried within sight of it.

Now having at last come upon people in Europe in possession of metal, we must go back many centuries to seek for the first great civilisation, not that of rough, nomadic tribes, but a civilisation in many ways as advanced as our own. This we shall find on the shores of the Arabian Gulf.

THE ART OF WESTERN ASIA

THE vague geographical term "Western Asia" is used here, for no other gives quite the right shade of meaning. "Babylonia" suggests the right regional area, but we have to discuss a civilisation existing thousands of years before Babylon was built. To day "Mesopotamia" is the name commonly used, but as it signifies, "the land *between* the Euphrates and Tigris," it limits our area unduly. Of this area only the lower portion, say from Babylon to the sea, is flat, the rivers flowing sluggishly, and depositing mud at the mouths, where instead of a fan-like delta being formed in the open sea, as in the case of the Nile, the head of the Arabian Gulf has been gradually filled in. The two rivers, formerly emptying themselves separately into the sea, are now joined, and form a single stream, the Shatt-el-Arab, a hundred miles from the coast.

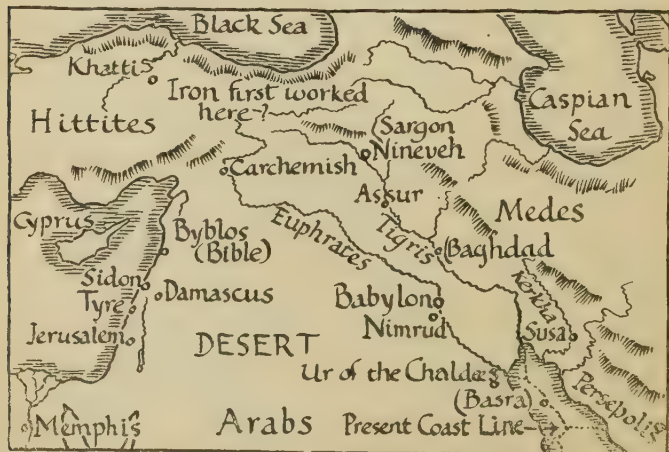


FIG. 15.

North of Baghdad both rivers flow through a barren tableland, having cut deep troughs for their passage (Fig. 15).

The fertility of the soil of the lower district would lead us to expect traces of an early civilisation. As everyone knows, the region has always been looked upon as the first abode of man, the "Garden of Eden," from whence civilisation spread both to the west and east. The earliest cities were built near the old river mouths, and they were inhabited by people we call the Sumerians, who perhaps wrested the lordship of this plain of "Shinar" (or Sumer) from the earlier stone-using people. The Elamites, living among the eastern hills, who sometimes quarrelled with the Sumerians, may have been there as early, or even earlier, for excavations in their city of Susa reveal a very ancient culture. Few finds have been made there save of pottery, but a knife-handle of ivory which may have been inspired by early Elam, by its freedom of handling and its fine animal forms,

is certainly the product of a civilisation where art had already risen to a high level (Fig. 16). This carving makes the European Magdalenian bone work look poor and rough.

The pottery of early Susa is as surprising as the realistic ivory carving, but for quite a different reason. The ware is of good quality, turned on a wheel, and decorated with



FIG. 16. From Upper Egypt.

painting, the brush being used to represent living forms; but these are "stylised," that is simplified and generalised, so as to appear mere ornament. A border of lines and dashes is found, on closer scrutiny, to be a procession of birds, as on the cup shewn in Fig. 17. Here are also attenuated dogs running, and the spirals evidently represents the horns of the mountain goat, which also appears on the knife-handle, but with a very different treatment. The



FIG. 17. A bird-border.

decoration of the ivory and of the cup do not match in style, and we can only infer that the pottery had passed through the realistic stage, although that raises the difficulty of accounting for the absence of pottery with realistic figures. This earlier work, however, may have arisen elsewhere. In reference to the poverty of finds at Susa, it is rather puzzling that, sometimes, but few objects are found on a site occupied, perhaps, for thousands of years, but the sequence of events may explain this. The city may have been raided and destroyed by fire; then followed a rummaging among the ruins by generations of nomads; finally denudation of the site by the elements took place, leaving but little to be found by excavation. The archæologist, in his search, hopes for unrobbed tombs with their grave's goods intact, but, in their absence, he can generally fall back on that invariable accompaniment of an old site, the city dust heap or mound of pot-sherds. Pots, once broken, are the most useless of things, and are promptly discarded; they are practically indestructible, and the undisturbed heap, if carefully examined, will give a faithful picture of the culture of the past, from the latest at the top down to the oldest at the bottom.

Pottery, too, tells us, by its shapes, what the early people used to drink from before its invention. In warm countries like Egypt, we find gourd-like forms (Fig. 43). Nomads, of

course, do not use pottery, for it would be too fragile to stand the jolting of constant journeys. They use leathern bottles and skins. To this day the Egyptian boy goes down to the Nile with his skin pitcher, fills it and sells the water in the town or village. When the nomads settled down, they made pots like their leathern vessels, with imitation seams and handles.

The Sumerians, too, have their mysteries. Their writing and their reliefs of the cattle, in which they took so much interest, have been found as far away as the borders of North-

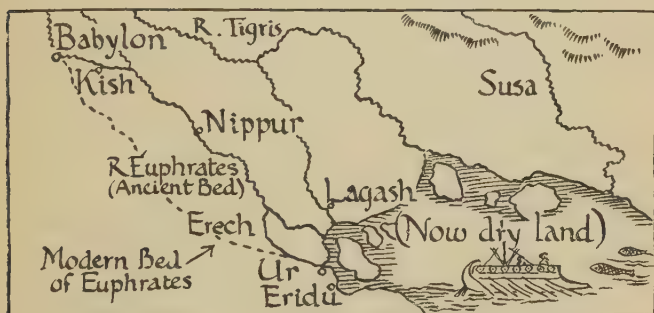


FIG. 18.

West India. Like the Elamites, they had been hill-men, and wove or knitted themselves fringed cloaks of wool. Their chief city was Nippur, and Eridu the chief port, other towns being Erech, Lagash (Tello) and Ur. These cities were built on the alluvial soil many feet deep, like that of the Nile delta, and stoneless, save for a few boulders brought down when the rivers were swollen. At such times large areas, as in Egypt, were flooded, and therefore the palaces and temples were placed on great platforms of brick, added to and repaired from time to time. Excavations in such a mound, as that of Nippur, always reveal an inner core of sun-baked Sumerian brick. These enormous platforms, in a country where there were no natural fortresses, served as castles, being surrounded by elaborate earthworks and canals.

While the Egyptian temples built of great stones still stand after the lapse of thousands of years, the Sumerian buildings and the platforms on which they were erected, being of brick, and mostly sun-dried at that, have slithered down into their original substance, so that the ruins, even later ones, as at Babylon, had already the appearance of natural mounds in the time of Alexander. Xenophen, marching with his Ten Thousand past the ruins of Nineveh, does not seem to have recognised it for what it was.

On a Sumerian city mound at one point will be seen a higher conical mass. This was the pyramid temple or "ziggurat." Excavations reveal ascending ramps or pathways which make it probable that the erection was built in stages with



FIG. 19. A Sumerian hen.

an ascending path to the top, where perhaps was an altar. The Egyptian pyramid may have looked somewhat like this before the ramps of earth used in the building of it were removed. In the ziggurat the ramps remained, but as all these pyramids are ruinous, restorations of the upper part at least

are entirely conjectural and the elaborate restorations in art histories have no basis in fact.

If we ask why the Sumerians built these lofty temples, we may surmise that being a hill people they perhaps worshipped in the open on "the high places," and that settled in the low country they yearned for their old altars on the hill tops, and therefore built themselves an artificial mountain, on the summit of which they placed the altar.

At El Obeid, close to Ur, excavation has disclosed the remains of a very early, small ziggurat, with interesting enrichment. Some of the inlay on the pillars was of shell, that of a shell-fish found in the Gulf. A copper panel represents a lion headed eagle clutching two stags, a heraldic-like device which occurs often in Sumerian art. This eagle, by way of Rome, came to be the symbol of countries as far away as Russia, Germany, and even the United States. On the walls of the temple were friezes of poultry, and

milking scenes, in stone and shell (Figs. 19, 20). A frieze, in high relief, representing recumbent oxen (Fig. 21), and figures of bulls and lions, in the round, were not cast, but made of sheets of copper beaten over a core. Like that of the Old Kingdom of Egypt, this early Sumerian art is more simply



FIG. 20. Inlaid stone and shell.

realistic than we shall find in later times. But it is the realism of animal forms, not of human, for the stimulus to represent people exactly as they looked was not so strong as in Egypt. Their ideas about the future life were not so clear-cut and detailed, there was not the same craving for material immortality, requiring portrait statues of the deceased.

But the Sumerians did take thought for the future life. The seal with which a man sealed his goods was buried with him and also his toilette case, while in the grave of a woman would be placed her jewels and eye-paint. Boats (of bitumen) have also been found in the early graves, as in Egypt, telling us that both peoples had the same idea of a journey to be undertaken after death.

Recent discoveries have given us a new idea of ancient



FIG. 21. Of beaten copper.

Sumerian art. At Ur, Mr. Woolley has found graves twenty feet below the present surface and below many others of later date. The Sumerians could not secure their dead in sealed rock chambers. There was



FIG. 22.

These winged heroes and monsters appear on the Assyrian monuments.

were founded. The deepest and therefore the earliest Sumerian graves reveal an abundance of gold. Such finds as a gold dagger with a handle of lapis lazuli, in a gold sheath ornamented with twisted wire, a golden reticule case, filigree patterned, containing toilet implements, stiletto, tweezers and spoon, gold chains of twisted wire (not actual closed links), beads, pendants and tiny gold amulets, all speak of the luxurious taste of the period, by far the earliest civilisation which has yet been discovered. The advanced character of the work tells us that the origin of Sumerian culture has yet to be found; this brilliant art represents a civilisation already old.

The Sumerians, judging by their records, seem to have had a troubled time. They were not isolated, as the Egyptians were, by deserts, but exposed to incursions of warlike tribes from the hills, and between times they quarrelled amongst themselves, so that their history is extremely complicated. They had no papyrus for paper, but used their universal material, clay. The ease with which bricks could be stamped before firing may have suggested the use of clay for writing. The scribe wrote

only the stoneless alluvial mud; consequently such material as fabrics and wood has perished. But these early graves are rich in objects which point to civilisation which was perhaps at its prime before the Egyptian dynasties



Ox



Foot

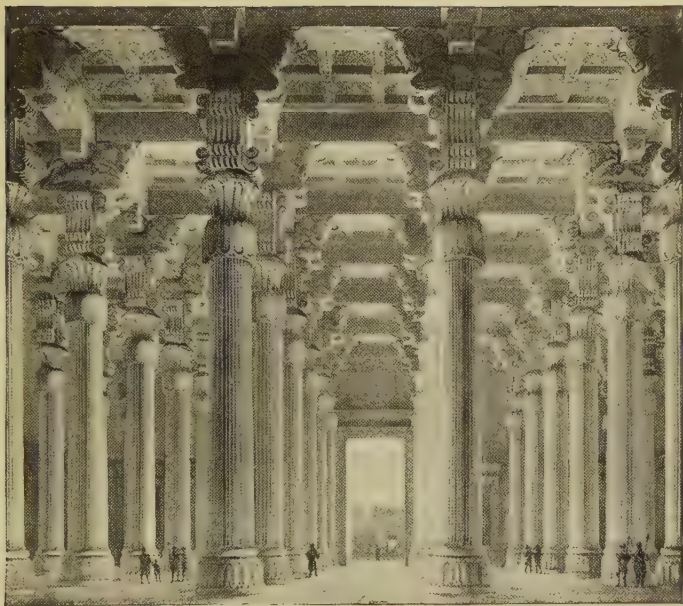


Sun = Day.



FIG. 23.

Pictographs and their equivalents in cuneiform or wedge-shaped characters.



HALL OF XERXES

From a drawing by Mr. R. Phené Spiers

This "restoration" gives us some idea of what may have been the glory that was Persepolis.

the message on a piece of clay in shape like a flat brick. After the writing was finished, the missive was sent to the kiln to be baked and became practically indestructible. Jars, the cords of bales of merchandise, even doors, were sealed by lumps of clay, on which the owner rolled his seal, kept fastened to a cord round his neck or attached to his wrist. Numbers of these cylindrical seals have been found, mostly of hard stone, and beautifully engraved with intaglio inscriptions, and the exploits of Sumerian heroes, in which man-headed and other monsters participate (Fig. 22). At first the writing, like that of Egypt, consisted of hieroglyphics, or pictures. Later, a "stylus" was used (perhaps at first the angular stem of a reed), making a series of wedge-shaped indentations. This altered the appearance of the character (Fig. 23).

The "cuneiform" or wedge writing was found to be easy to carve in stone, and so the hieroglyphic signs were abandoned. As in Egypt, stone monuments were considered as suitable places for inscriptions, the writing being carried right across the figures.

There was little opportunity for stone carving in this land of clay. A ruler thought it no mean present when he gave a stone door-socket on which the temple door could pivot, for he inscribed his name and titles thereon. The figure from Lagash is so human in its simple pose, and so



FIG. 24. A figure carved in stone (from Lagash).

well proportioned in its upper part, that it is somewhat of a shock to find it to be dwarf-like, with feet where its thighs should be (Fig. 24). The sculptor could not find it in his

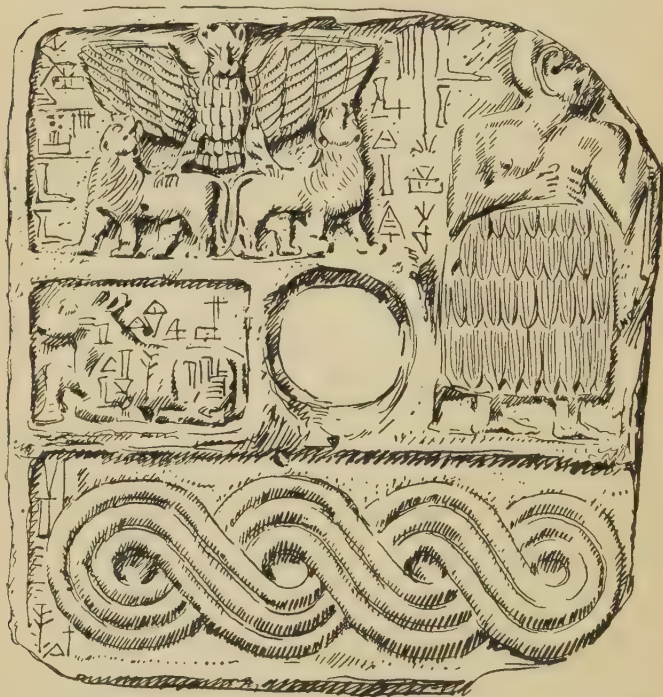


FIG. 25. A votive plaque of baked clay to hang up in the temple. The "twist" below is a forerunner of the interlaced work which was so much in favour from Roman times onwards.

heart to chip away so much of a valuable stone as would be necessary if proper proportions had to be observed. The figures in the clay reliefs repeat the same stunted proportions. But in one monument at least a great improvement in the proportions and movement of the human figure is to be seen. About 3000 B.C., the Sumerians were conquered by the

Akkadians, Semitic desert nomads under Sargon who founded a great state extending from Elam to the Mediterranean; the admixture of races brought about an advance in art which is well seen in the stele of Naram-sin, a son of Sargon, depicting a victory over the Elamites (Figs. 26, 27). As in later reliefs, the king is of heroic proportions compared with his soldiers and his enemies. The technique of bas-relief is well understood and the figures are life-like in their movements and proportions. The work is equal in merit to that of the corresponding period in Egypt, the Old Kingdom, and the figures are unfettered by the long woollen garments of earlier (and later) times.

Before 2000 B.C., Babylon, already ancient, had become the chief city. The reign of Hammurabi, the great law-giver, saw the extension of the power of Babylonia among the nations. His famous code testified to the high state of civilisation throughout his great realm. Something like a parcel post was in working, the parcels being letters in the form of bricks. But of architecture there is little or none to tell, for the city which has now come to light is the later Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, built on the ruins of the earlier. Hammurabi recorded his code on a stele of hard diorite, a block nearly eight feet high, which must have come from Africa (Fig. 28). Above is the King receiving the laws from the sun-god, from whose shoulder proceed flames. The conception and execution exhibit a stiffness and formality compared with the figure work of the stele of Naram-sin. From now onwards, this rigidity continued. The mode of dressing did not make for freedom of movement, the long, heavy woollen garments giving no opportunity for observation of the human form, as in Egypt. The drapery on the reliefs was patterned and enriched, as it was undoubtedly in the actual weaving of it. The fabrics of Babylonia, rugs, carpets and shawls, influenced



FIG. 26.
Stele of Naram-sin.

the art of the Mediterranean world, for they were exported in large quantities. Besides weaving, the Babylonians were experts in other arts, which we now think of as peculiar

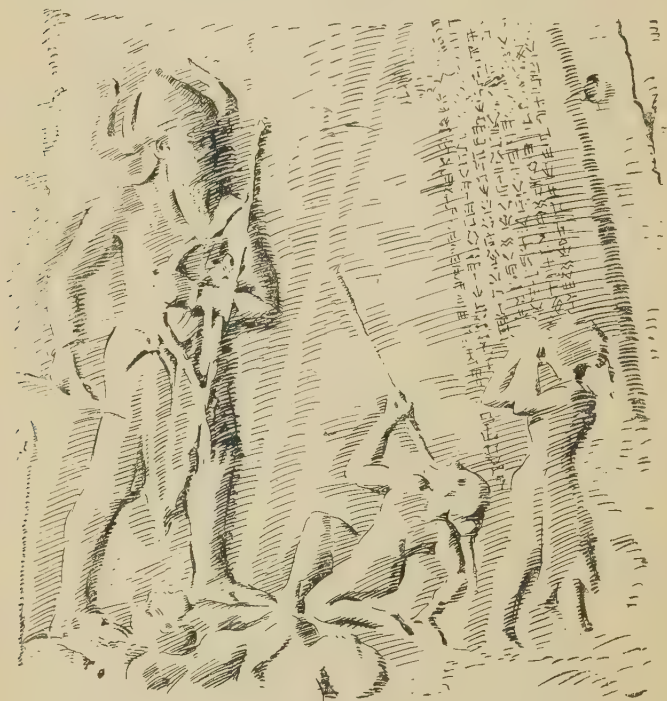


FIG. 27. Detail from the stele of Naram-sin.

to the East. Their seals and gems were cut with great refinement; glazed and painted tiles covered the walls. Of their woodwork nothing remains. Metal work, whether cast or repoussé, they delighted in. The magnificent silver vase, engraved with the heraldic motives already referred to, looks almost Chinese in form (Fig. 29). There is no doubt that China, the antiquity of whose civilisation has been much

exaggerated, received in early times influences from the west.

The clean-shaven Egyptian, scantily clad, and that only in white linen, which he changed frequently, was amused yet scandalised at the appearance of the Semitics with their long curled beards and hooked noses, their bodies wrapped around in long garments fringed and decorated, and he took malicious pleasure in exaggerating those characteristics on reliefs representing the Asiatic as a bound and suppliant captive. These figures indeed are the first caricatures which have come down to us.

ABOUT 2000 B.C. Babylon suffered a reverse at the hands of a neighbouring people, the Hittites, who had occupied Syria and the greater part of Asia Minor, where they controlled the production of iron. In their early reliefs they are represented as wearing pig-tails (with an upward twist), and shoes the points of which turn upwards. (Plate III, upper relief.) Such footwear is worn by the Turks and Greeks to this day. Rock-cut sculpture was a characteristic form of Hittite art, and the early period, with its double-headed eagles and lions, seems to have affinity with Sumerian art. The sculpture is found in rocky ravines, and on cliff faces. The figures, although archaic in style during all periods, have a feeling for mass and line. In the relief shewn in the lower part of Plate III, the regularly disposed fluted folds of the skirts



FIG. 28. Upper part of stele of Hammurabi. Many rows of lettering come below the carving, embodying the famous laws.

suggest that Hittite art may have influenced the Greeks, and a carved symbol, representing columns with Ionic capitals, tells us that this "order" was in use long before the Asiatic Greeks adopted it. A feature of the sculpture is its processional character; to

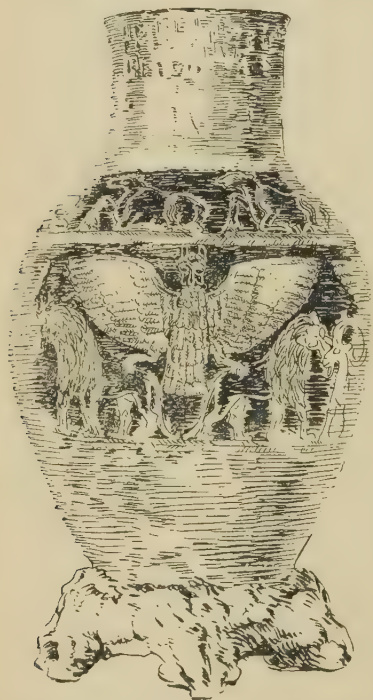


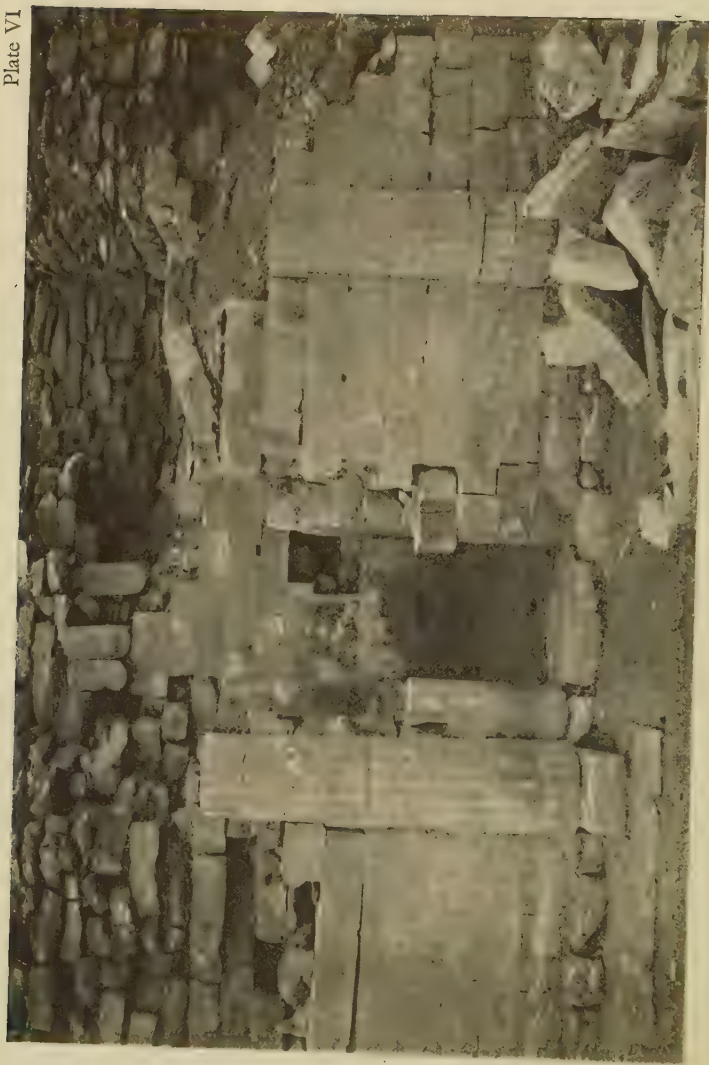
FIG. 29. The figures should be compared with those on the plaque shewn in Fig. 25.

be seen also in early Persian sculpture. Figure follows figure, some on foot, others supported by animals. We shall meet with these processions in Greek and Persian friezes.

The Hittites, at the height of their power, kept back the Assyrians, and crippled Egypt's overlordship in Syria. They raided Babylon and sacked it; somewhat later, the city was taken by the Scythians or Kassites another horse-riding people. Under their rule, the trade of Babylon fell off, and we hear little of the city for a thousand years.

Some time after 1500 B.C., Babylonia was invaded by the Assyrians, a Semitic people who had settled at Assur on the northern uplands in Sumerian times. Toughened by constant war with

Babylonians, Hittites, Kassites, Syrians, Hebrews and Phœnicians, Assyria dominated every nation she encountered. Her efficient military organisation and the ferocity of her soldiery made her the terror of her neighbours. The Kassites had taught her the use of cavalry and from the



A THIRD DYNASTY CHAPEL
This delicate architecture with its fluted columns and fine masonry preceded Greek building by thousands of years.

Hittites she had obtained iron for weapons. The Assyrian rulers seemed to live in the saddle or the chariot, either in warfare or the chase, not only of the wild goat and horse, but also of lions, the quarry most worthy of pursuit, because of the danger attending it. As their armies subdued the surrounding nations, wealth and slaves poured in. At Assur, Nimrod, Nineveh and Khorsabad are the same great mounds as at Babylon and the earlier Sumerian cities, for the Assyrians took over the arts of the conquered Babylonians, their seals, their cuneiform writing and their building methods. Palaces now became the chief buildings, although on each site there was a ziggurat, for the Assyrians were a devout people in their way. On the raised platform, great courts were set out with a maze of chambers around, very narrow for their length and with immensely thick walls, but whether they were roofed with vaults of inclined arched brickwork, such as the Egyptians constructed for their granaries at Thebes, or with palm trunks laid across, it is difficult to tell, although certainly the arch was well understood by the Assyrians. On a slab from Nineveh are representations of domed buildings, and small vaulted cellars have been found. A great semicircular arch formed the gateway at Khorsabad. This palace, built by Sargon II, was of enormous area, occupying more than twenty acres, and with nearly a thousand rooms. The restorations seen in the books are entirely conjectural, for no one knows what the upper parts looked like. When seen from the plain it must have been an imposing sight, standing as it did on its platform some fifty feet above the level. Facing the main entrance were broad flights of steps, and elsewhere inclined ramps gave chariots and horsemen access to the palace.



FIG. 30.

An Assyrian "victory." Compare with the Egyptian winged globe shewn in Fig. 86.

At the main entrance, the portals were guarded by the

famous human-headed bulls, of which there are examples in the British Museum. They are of interest to children because each monster has five legs apiece! An additional foreleg has been inserted in the side view, in order to make the representation complete as a relief. One was evidently expected to ignore the awkward view in which all five legs



FIG. 31. A bas-relief representing the transport of a human-headed bull (already partially carved) from the quarries. Compare the mode of transit with that of the Egyptian seen in Fig. 49. Here rollers are used under the sledge. Note the harshness of the overseers towards the workers.

are visible. The work has been conceived in relief rather than in the round, because such treatment afforded more suitable surfaces for the inscriptions, which ran right across them. A lion sometimes takes the place of the bull (Fig. 32).

Often, an eagle-headed deity is represented with the ruler, both occupied in tending the "tree of life," a stylised version



FIG. 32. A "warder" human-headed, winged lion. The Assyrians and Babylonians paid great attention to their personal appearance. Their hair and beards were carefully oiled and curled.

of the date-palm. It refers, probably, to the labours of the sovereign in fostering irrigation, which, as in Egypt, was a national work (Fig. 33). The date-palm was indigenous to this region, but was not known to early Egypt; pictures of the Pyramids in building sometimes portray groves of palms, quite erroneously.

No doubt the Assyrian palaces were magnificent in their way. They were filled with bronze and gilded furniture, carpets and hangings; the extremely detailed costumes and

coiffures indicate that the palace people paid great attention to their personal appearance, and their surroundings were correspondingly luxurious.

The walls of the audience chambers of the palace were faced with slabs of alabaster or other soft stone, material which could be cut and scraped away expeditiously. On these slabs were represented the exploits of the monarch in war and



FIG. 33.

The "Tree of Life" or date-palm.

in the chase. Thus the walls of the palace became an illustrated history. All the art was in full view, and expressed the character and culture of the people more openly and frankly perhaps than any other race has chosen to reveal. The reliefs are at once similar to and different from Egyptian work. The convention of the human figure is somewhat the same; the frontal eye and the further shoulder appear as in the Egyptian reliefs. But the registers, one above the other of the latter, are sometimes rejected by the Assyrian artists for a treatment like that of a "bird's-eye" view.

These reliefs give clear evidence of the harsh and cruel spirit of the Assyrians. The stern faces, the swollen muscles with their iron tendons, are in keeping with the enormities

inflicted by the conquerors on their captives. The king orders his enemy to be flayed alive, or with his own hand puts out the eyes of his helpless foes, and betrays no shame at being depicted in such an act. On a relief of a siege, prisoners are being impaled, a whole forest of these unfortunates telling the garrison what they may expect. Assurbanipal and his queen drink to his triumph in the harem garden, the head of his chief enemy hanging from the branch of a tree near by. On the slabs representing the chase, lions gush forth their



FIG. 34. Wounded lioness.

life's blood, or with paralysed limbs drag themselves along, roaring with pain (Fig. 34). But here the artist, although more savage than the cave-man in gloating over such scenes of butchery, forgot his mannerisms and formality. The king, even when facing a lion at bay, is stiff and wooden, but the beasts, in all their pain and fury, live again before us, as they did in the cave art. The birds of Egypt, the flowers of Crete, the horses and lions of Assyria, reveal this interest of the early peoples in natural form, an interest perhaps inherited from the artists of the caves. One of the few touches of tenderness the Assyrian artist allowed himself to reveal was when he depicted the wild mare terrified by the tumult of

the chase, yet slackening her speed to a trot (as we see by the positions of her feet, as correctly portrayed as in a Muybridge photograph) and calling to her foal nearly overtaken by the fierce mastiff (Fig. 35).

By 700 B.C. Assyria had become a great empire; she had completely subjugated the Syrian peoples and had reached the Mediterranean. Assurnasirpal was one of the most determined of fighters, and he was followed by other fierce soldiers, as Sargon, a general who had taken the name of



FIG. 35. Chase of the wild horse, not the wild ass, as it is sometimes described.

the first great ruler of Babylon, two thousand years before, and by Sennacherib. The last destroyed Babylon utterly. Then came Egypt's turn. Esarhaddon had occupied Memphis about 670 B.C., and a few years later Assurbanipal went right up the Nile to Thebes, which he sacked, and so destroyed that the city never flourished again. The harshness and cruelty of the invaders shocked the comparatively humane Egyptians, who never forgave the Assyrians.

A little before 600 B.C., the Assyrian empire, overgrown and unwieldy, had fallen to pieces. The Babylonians, with the aid of the Medes, recovered their territory, and Babylon

was rebuilt. Its great temples, towers, palaces and "hanging" gardens made it renowned as one of the "seven wonders" during the long reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Of this magnificence little remains, however, except the mounds and the Ishtar gate, a great portal, the side walls of which were decorated with a frieze of lions in coloured and glazed tiles, while on the tower itself were bulls and dragons. The animal forms were carefully schemed to fit the courses of bricks,

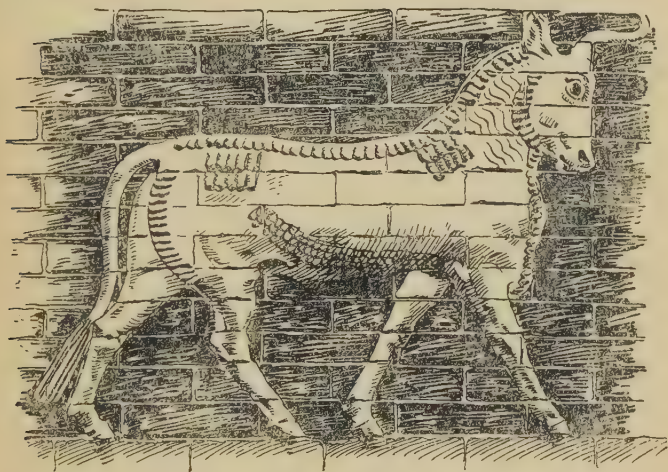


FIG. 36. A bull from the Ishtar Gate at Babylon.

which must have been set up temporarily, while the clay was yet damp. On these the figure was modelled, then cut through to the joins of the bricks, which, now bearing parts of the modelling, were coloured and fired (Fig. 36). Although the modeller was thus tied down by the conditions, nothing of freedom and vitality has been lost. The position of the feet are correct for a walking action, and the poise of the head, arranged to fit the jointing, is characteristic.

In less than a hundred years, the IIIrd Dynasty of Babylon was overthrown by the Persians, like the Medes, a hardy Indo-European people from the hills. The Persian empire

expanded with great rapidity east and west. Egypt was conquered and the Persians crossed into Europe and invaded Thrace. But little Greece, by checking the power of Xerxes at Salamis, prevented the Persians from overrunning Europe, and it is *her* art which has influenced the western world down to the present day.

During their most splendid period, the Persian rulers erected a series of immense halls and palaces at Susa and Persepolis. The latter site lies at the foot of a rocky slope, and a platform had to be made by hewing out and levelling up (to be compared with the terraced temple at Der-el-Bahri), a platform more than a thousand feet square and paved with immense blocks. Here were erected several great halls and palaces, the earliest being the palace of Darius, raised on a plinth twenty feet above the platform level. This plinth was richly adorned with reliefs of marching soldiers, and lions attacking bulls, old Assyrian or Babylonian themes. The stone windows and entrances still remain, the doors being surmounted by a roll and cavetto as in Egypt (Plate IV). Xerxes occupied the rest of the platform with his buildings. The staircase leading to the palaces of two flights, each twenty feet wide, had treads with a rise of only four inches, so that a horseman might ascend. Opposite the stair was a propylea or state gateway with two entrances, each flanked by colossal winged bulls. Although the figures were still blocks of stone in relief style, yet the sculptors had become more sophisticated than in Assyrian times, for they omitted the fifth leg.

The chief of these great square palaces was the hall of Xerxes on its own terrace, adorned with reliefs in three rows, of hundreds of figures, soldiers, courtiers, musicians, and subject peoples come to do homage. It is the same mode of decoration as in the Assyrian palaces, but brought *outside*, for this hall apparently had little wall space; the wooden roof was supported by great columns, and it was largely open to the air.

These friezes exhibit none of the horrors we saw in Assyrian art, for the Persian rule was noted for its clemency. The conquerors granted their new subjects their lives and property, recognised their religion and absorbed their art.

Hence the extraordinary medley of styles and motives seen in the enormous hall of Xerxes, which covered twice the area of the great hall of Karnak on the Nile (Plate V). Its seventy-two columns, of which some still stand (Plate IV) were nearly as high as those of the Karnak nave, but much more slender, being only five feet in diameter at the base. They were widely spaced because the wooden roof was of no great weight. These columns reveal the influence of three distinct styles (Fig. 37). The topmost feature, forming a bracket for the support of the ceiling beams and belonging to the roof rather than to the column, consisted of the foreparts of two Babylonian bulls. Below this came four double Ionic capitals arranged vertically! These volutes are apparently a mistaken borrowing from Asiatic Greece where the Ionic capital (derived from the Hittites or elsewhere) had long been in use. Below the volutes is a capital somewhat of Egyptian type. The base of the shaft is like an Egyptian bell capital inverted. In Tudor England similar anachronisms were perpetrated, for the carvers, their traditional, mediæval motives no longer in favour, had to use the new forms of the Renaissance with only Flemish pattern books to guide them, and often made mistakes. Sometimes one sees on a carved Elizabethan chimney-piece with pilasters the Ionic capital upside down! To a workman ignorant of the "orders" and what they stood for, the scrolls looked, perhaps, as well one way as another. But the Persian graciousness of spirit had its good effect on succeeding periods, and later Persian decoration

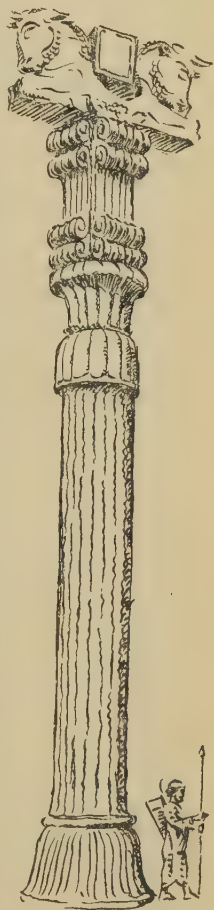


FIG. 37.

compels our admiration for its delicacy of form, ingenuity of pattern and beauty of colour.

The palaces of Persepolis and Susa must have been magnificently adorned and furnished. There was colour and gold, great hangings to keep out the sun, and fine carpets underfoot. All the wealth of the Empire from India to Egypt contributed. Around the palaces were doubtless beautiful gardens vying with those of Babylon, but all is

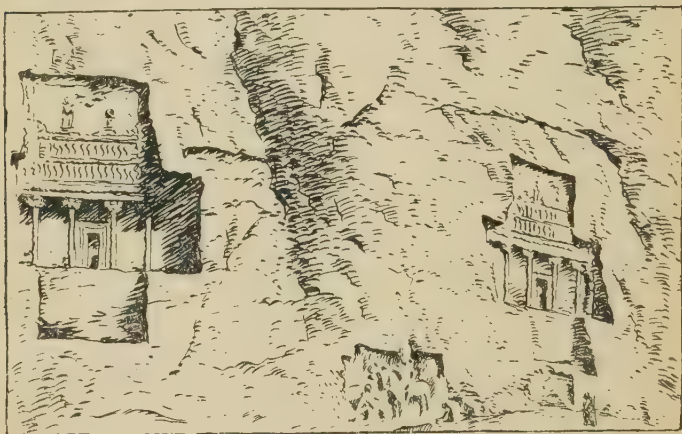


FIG. 38. Rock-cut tombs imitating palace facades.

now arid and waste. Near the palaces of Persepolis, so high in the rock that it is difficult to reach them, are the tombs of the Persian monarchs. The cliff face has been carved into the likeness of a palace facade, with columns carrying bull capitals, and above, a great relief representing the monarch offering to the god before his peoples. Here was no attempt to hide away the site of the tomb as in Egypt, and these tombs of Naksh-i-Rustum suffered the same fate (Fig. 38). The lowest relief is of later date and represents the Sassanian monarch, Sapor II, receiving the submission of the defeated Roman emperor Valerian.

THE ART OF EGYPT

EGYPT has during the past few years taken the place of India and of China in the minds of many; it has become the land of romance. The impressive and stately march of her civilisation, a civilisation fully developed in remote times and retaining its essential characters for ages, the monuments, temples and tombs which meet the eye at every bend of the Nile, and the evidences of a highly gifted and artistic people constantly uncovered by the spade, have invested the land with an interest, which the discovery of the burial-place of Tutankhamen has intensified. Indeed Egypt, as regards her art, is overtaking Greece in her claims on our attention. Ever since the Renaissance the world has bowed down to the art of Greece, although that art often existed only in the form of a commercialised Greco-Roman copy. Greek culture in its various aspects, poetry, architecture and sculpture with its pantheon of human gods and goddesses, has moulded our ideas of what is beautiful. For example, the Greek canon of the human figure, a system of ideal proportion, dominates our taste at the present day, such as our preference for small hands and feet, and regularity of feature. But so far as technique is concerned, practically everything the Greeks had, they owed to the Nile, where for long they had been trading. The immaculate workmanship of the marble walling of the Parthenon can be matched in the far larger blocks of the lower courses of the Great Pyramid, built thousands of years before the Greeks, as a nation, existed. The nave columns of Luxor are as fine as any Greek colonnade (Plate IX). Greek sculpture never attained the realism and intensity of the Memphite statues, while the jewellery of the Greeks, fine as it is, cannot hold its own against the impeccable workmanship of the diadems and pendants of the XIIth Dynasty. We have to remember then when praising the art of later nations, that

most of the problems of craftsmanship were solved long before by the Egyptians; they had that capacity for taking infinite pains which amounted to genius.

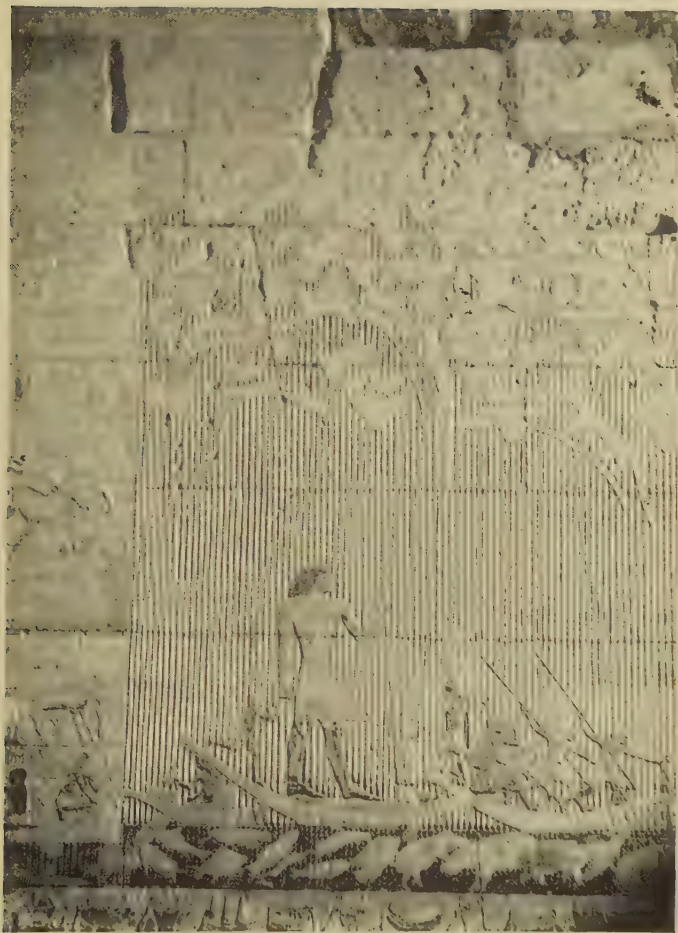
First the country itself. The visitor expecting stretches of sandy desert, may traverse the land for a thousand miles without coming in contact with even a grain of sand, for everywhere is verdure and luxuriant crops. The great deserts on either side of the narrow, flat trench which forms the Nile valley, rear their cliff-like walls away in the background (Fig. 39). These cliffs and hills always fill the east



FIG. 39. The Nile at Luxor. Behind the rocky hills lie the "Tombs of the Kings."

and west horizons, because nowhere is cultivable Egypt more than fifteen miles wide, a mere strip or ribbon of soil compared with the vast wastes on either side (Fig. 40). Here and there, the desert sand overflows the bluffs, and pours down to the fields (Fig. 41).

Then there is the Nile, a muddy stream perhaps, but in the distance always brightest-blue, the reflection from the cloudless sky. Rising at its appointed season, the river floods the parched land in September with the surplus waters from the great lakes, and the rains of Abyssinia. As the inundation recedes, the fellah sows his seed on the patches of soil as fast as they emerge, and drives sheep or goats across to tread it in. Such may have been the very beginnings of agriculture. The wild grain sowed itself, and the early people, noting its sprouting after the flood, saved the seed to sow by hand. The invention of ploughs and other cultivat-



HUNTING IN THE PAPYRUS BEDS

This work of the Old Kingdom is "raised" relief, like most of the reliefs of the period. Later the reliefs were "sunk." See Plate XII.

ing tools would follow in due course as need was found for them. The first step in civilisation may have been as easy as that.

As elsewhere, there was civilised life in Egypt, long before the introduction of metal. In the dry sand and gravel, beyond the old inundation level, are numbers of graves, which archaeologists believe to cover a long period, lasting, as at Anau, for thousands of years. Only towards the close of this era are to be found metal implements. One of these graves has been set up in the British Museum, and we can see the little Mediterranean man crouching among the pots and implements which were to provide him with subsistence in the future life. The equipment of the grave reveals the skill of these people. There are tiny vases of hard stone wrought with toilsome drilling and grinding (Fig. 42); these contained ointment and unguents. With them are red earthenware pots, their mouths blackened because they stood upside down in the embers of the furnace (Fig. 43). These pots, which contained nourishment for



FIG. 40.

the dead man, like the stone vases, are beautifully made by hand, so true in curve and smooth of surface that one has to look closely to assure oneself that a wheel has not been used. The flint knives, too, especially in the later period of this "pre-dynastic" age, are even



FIG. 41. The sand of the desert has partly covered the bluffs, and poured down to the valley.

more cleverly worked than the leaf-shaped weapons of Solutré, although with the same surface flaking. One might suppose that the Solutrean culture at some time had reached the Nile (Fig 44). But modern Australian aborigines have exhibited almost an equal control over their material, chipping glass, and porcelain insulators with great precision, as may be seen in the British Museum.

The pots, knives, beads, paint for the eyelids, consisting of a green copper ore called malachite, and palette for grinding it (Fig. 45), and perhaps a boat, as we find in the early graves of Ur, for the journey through the underworld, tell us that these people had a picture, however vague, of the life after death.



FIG. 42. A stone vase wrought by hand.

Skilful as they were in all the arts, from basketry to ivory carving, there is nothing in their work which might lead us to think that they were capable of the striking development in civilisation and art which was to take place at the close of this period; a

change which was effected with great rapidity, considering the thousands of years during which this farming people had continued their culture without, apparently, great variation. How was this change brought about? There are no records in the pre-dynastic age, although later they were kept with such minuteness and preserved so well on imperishable stone, or on papyrus hidden safely away, that there is no early nation whose history is so documented as that of Egypt.

We can surmise that the change was owing, as remarked above, to a consciousness of new needs arising from an extraordinary development of the belief in the future life, a belief connected with the worship of the gods, and which ramified in a complex way, until eventually it affected the labours of the entire population.

As we walk through the Egyptian galleries of the British Museum, and see the great gods towering mysteriously in the dim light, we are apt to think of the Egyptians as a mystical, priest-ridden, ascetic race. Priest-ridden they may have been, but the ordinary Egyptian lived (if he had means) a happy, luxurious life, always engaged in outdoor pleasures, or eating and drinking. His house was gay with colour and surrounded by pleasant gardens with



FIG. 43. A hand-made pot.



FIG 44. A sacrificial flint knife. Compare with Solutrean knife seen in Fig. 3. This would have a handle of gold or ivory, perhaps like Fig. 16.

shady trees. He was indeed so much a materialist that he refused to face death; he wished to secure for himself a continued existence, to sail in his funeral boat to the Elysian fields and live happy ever afterwards, much as he had done on earth. His body was to be preserved from decay, although the complete mummifying of the corpse and padding it out into the semblance of life was not practised before the later dynasties. All the arts were called upon to enable the deceased to sustain himself in the tomb, surrounded by the comforts and pleasures to which he had been accustomed.

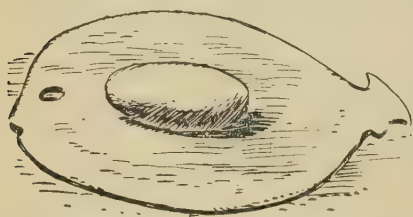


FIG. 45. The early palettes are shaped like a fish or other creature. Later the form becomes "stylised," as we saw in the patterns on the cup from early Elam in Fig. 17.

Weaving, jewellery, sculpture, painting, masonry and other arts had to meet the imperious demands of the funerary officials, demands which could be satisfied because a new power had come into the land—metal—making all things possible. The first implements were of copper, a soft metal,

which, however, could be hardened, although we are not sure in what way this was done. The intentional addition of tin to make bronze came later.

The herdsmen and farmers of Europe, as we have seen, got on very well without metal. Here we are concerned with a change which not only included a rapid improvement in the crafts, but took note of other things. The heavenly bodies were watched and a calendar was evolved, one perhaps more convenient than our own. Records were found necessary and writing was invented. The pre-dynastic culture had evolved into a civilisation, not indeed like our own, but as fully deserving the name.

The stone knives, and other tools were translated into their copper equivalents, although, owing to the scarcity of metal, stone tools were still used. The beautifully flaked stone knife was given a religious sanction, and continued to

be used for sacrifices throughout the ages during which the Egyptian beliefs persisted (Fig. 56). But the metal tools made some tasks possible which were not within the power of stone. Long saws cut out great blocks in the quarries, blocks which copper chisels carved with subtlety and precision. Timber, too, could now be dealt with, and sawn into planks for shipbuilding. For many things were wanted, which had to be brought from afar, and great ships with bellying sails and flashing oars left the Nile, returning with cedar from Syria, copper from Cyprus and oil from Crete, and many other products from far-off countries.

Expeditions left for the south, returning with ivory, gold, gums, feathers and slaves. All kinds of precious substances were wanted to satisfy the demands of ritual. Perhaps we are too obsessed by the tomb and its contents; we are apt to think of the Egyptians as a race of super-undertakers; but we can see from the paintings in the tombs and the clothing and furniture deposited within them, that the daily life, in its aspects of luxury, beauty and art, was quite on a par with the life in the tomb.

The building of the early dynasties is surprisingly refined. The chapel of the tomb of King Zeser, with its beautifully worked masonry and its fluted columns, looks more like Greek work than Egyptian, and the early Greeks may have seen it and taken hints therefrom (Plate VI). Later, in the IVth Dynasty, a change took place, perhaps owing to an influx of fresh blood; and certainly, some of the skeletons found in the graves of the IIIrd Dynasty onwards are bigger and broader than earlier. The new rulers, if new they were, demanded bulk, weight and mass of masonry. Of what use was it to preserve the corpse, if its resting-place was not made secure. Let stone on stone, quantities of it be piled up to make a safe resting-place, and after many experiments, the Great Pyramid was raised, the tomb of Khufu (whom the Greeks called Cheops) (Fig. 46). This, the mightiest work of man, stands on the very edge of the desert, close to and above the cultivated land, and not isolated, as photographers love to make it appear, in the desert. It covers thirteen acres, and Trafalgar Square, reckoning in the total area of roads and pavements around, would have to be repeated

several times to fill the space. St. Paul's Cathedral would fit in bodily with many feet above the cross to spare. And we must remember the Pyramid is *solid*, except for two small chambers (Fig. 47).

Architects have derided it because all this masonry is used to such little purpose. Only an insignificant hill has been thrown up. It remains, however, an imperishable monument to the memory of the monarch in whose life-time it was built, uninjured save for the removal of its smooth facing stone and

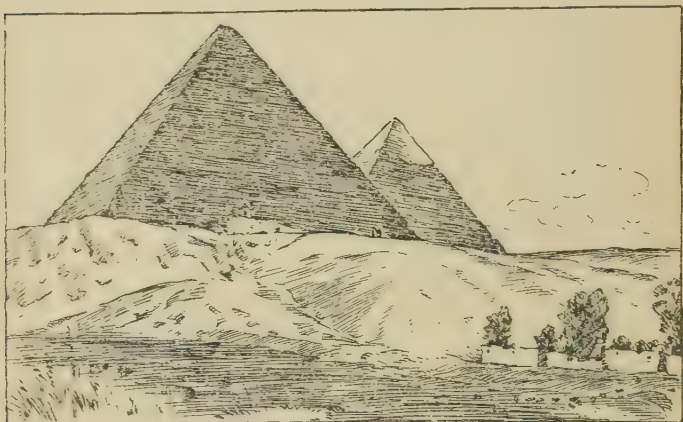


FIG. 46. The Great Pyramid.

about thirty feet of its apex; all the damage that the fanaticism of Arab rulers was able to effect.

This vast tomb gives us some idea of the character of the Egyptians. They had splendid powers of organisation and direction. Without any mechanical traction other than the strength of men's muscles, they were able to hew these huge blocks from the quarries of Mokattam, beyond Cairo, transport them to the water's edge during the flood, raft them across, unload again and drag them up the inclined road specially built for the purpose to the site where the Pyramid was to tower above the valley. For thirty years during the months of inundation when the field workers were idle perforce,



The Sphinx uncovered by the recent excavations. Behind are
the Pyramids of Gisa

it took the labours of one hundred thousand men. And these men were not slaves or captives ; the Pyramids were standing ages before the kingdom of Israel was established ; they were workers who during the season of tillage kept the country going, and had, therefore, to be cared for and well fed. Strict discipline there must have been ; many men moved as one in obedience to sharply delivered orders, equalling the force of a great machine. The stick may have been used for laggards, but that the lash descended without discrimination,

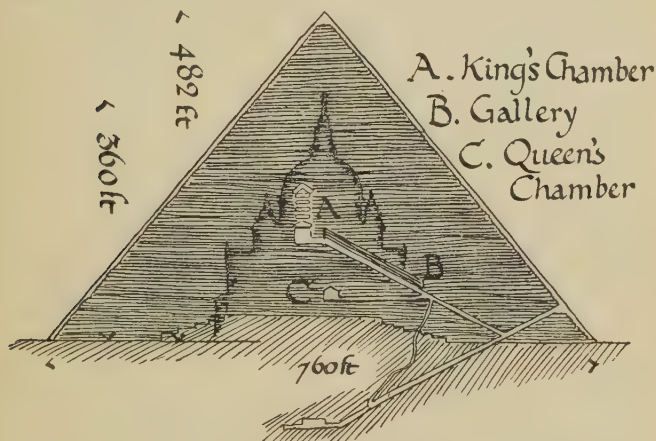


FIG. 47. The Great Pyramid compared with St. Paul's Cathedral.

with death for those who fell, is void of truth, for the work could not have been done under such conditions ; in the Great Pyramid can be seen evidence of technical skill, as already mentioned, unsurpassed in the history of building. As Sir Flinders Petrie has remarked, in level, in length of side and in trueness of angle, the great square of the base is practically correct ; one could cover the amount of error with one's thumb. The jointing of the lower courses of masonry and of the ascending gallery is practically invisible, for the film of mortar is less than a fiftieth of an inch in thickness !

As for the general construction of the Pyramid, probably, sloping "ramps" or pathways of earth and sun-dried brick were made, and the blocks dragged up them on sledges. A great sledge which has seen heavy wear is in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 48). There is no evidence of rollers having been used, as in Poynter's picture known as *Israel in Egypt*. (The painter of historical subjects is always liable to be "caught out" by later archaeological discoveries). For the largest masses, the sledge running on a prepared road was found to give the best results. A relief representing a colossus being transported on a sledge gives some idea of the careful organisation and attention to detail this involved (Fig. 49). The Egyptians understood thoroughly the mar-

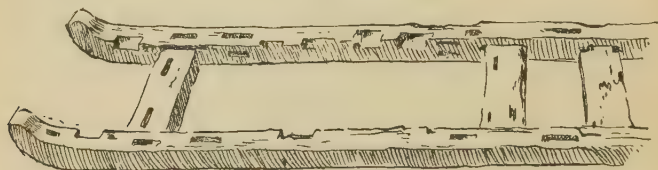


FIG. 48. This sledge has been much used.

shalling of human effort. The ranks of haulers are all in perfect alignment, calculated to pull with equal strength. There are men pouring out oil to reduce friction, and others with levers to help at difficult places. An Assyrian relief, in the British Museum, of a period many hundred years later, depicts a great human-headed bull being transported by means of rollers (Fig. 31), and we can hardly believe a resourceful people like the Egyptians were unacquainted with the use of the roller, though strange to say the wheeled vehicle did not come into use until the end of the next great period, and then only for war and racing. Egypt, inundated for a long period every year, and practically without roads, had, and has still, little use for carts. The Nile is the great highway, indeed inhabited Egypt is but the former bed of the river. Goods are carried by water, or on donkey or camel back.

Every precaution was taken to make of the Great Pyramid

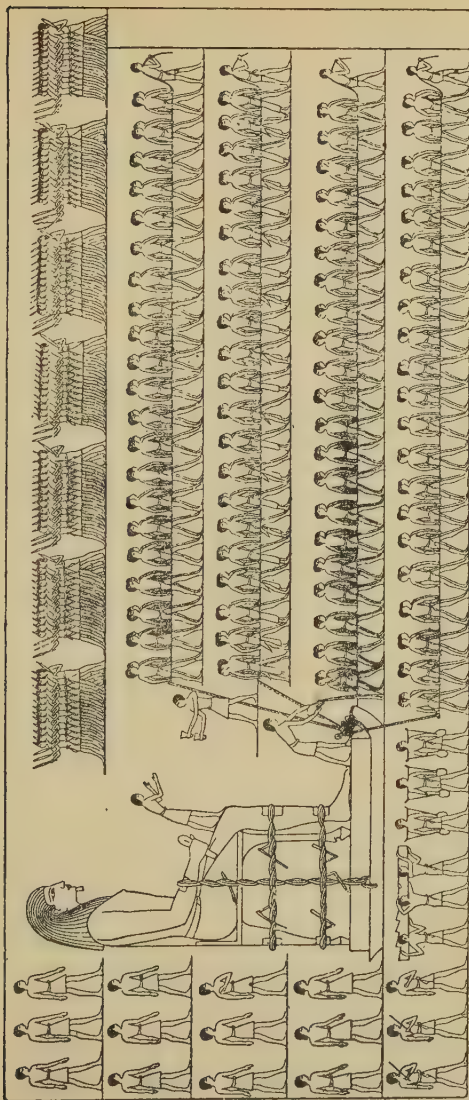


Fig. 49. A colossus transported on a sledge, the road being oiled so that the runners may glide smoothly. No rollers are seen. Compare the perfect organisation and precision with the rough and ready methods of the Assyrians in Fig. 31.

an impregnable tomb. A great stone portcullis exactly fitted the entrance. In other Pyramids are elaborate devices for preventing the desecration of the interment. In one, a passage wanders all round the tomb-cell without entering it, in others false doors were constructed to lure robbers from the right path. The cell of the tomb of Amenemhat III



FIG. 50. Portrait statue of Nefert.

consisted of a single block of glass hard quartzite, twenty-two feet long and eight feet wide, with walls three feet thick! The entrance to this tomb was to be protected by three massive slabs. Of these, the tomb officials, conveniently for those following, omitted to replace the two inner slabs, leaving the tomb protected by one slab only.

Around the Pyramids of Giza stretches a cemetery or necropolis where princes and nobles were interred in small pyramids or in "mastaba" tombs, as near as could be to the royal sanctuary, for in

some vague sense the monarch represented his people, and their hope was in him. The Great Pyramid tomb was the symbol of his power and the reverence with which he was regarded. He must continue to live after death, and to that end his body must be preserved and hidden where no destroying foe of any kind could reach it. Besides an impregnable tomb, more was required. Injury or annihilation might overtake the corpse. Let there be images made as lifelike as possible; these, if need arise, will act as

substitutes. So began the art of portraiture in stone. Spurred on by the demands of the priests, sculptors and painters combined to produce statues of wood or stone painted in their natural colours, with a fidelity of facial traits, obviously authentic. These statues of the Old Kingdom are as lifelike in feature as the figures in Madame Tussauds, although if they were no more than that, they would not merit our attention, for mere imitation is not art. But these Egyptian artists gained such power over their material, in responding to the demands for likeness, that they were able to achieve greatness. They endowed their figures with character, with nobility of pose and expression.

These sepulchral statues are not so much stiff as immobile; they assume positions which could be maintained for ever. The seated figure has the hands resting on the thighs or clasped across the breast; in a standing position the left foot

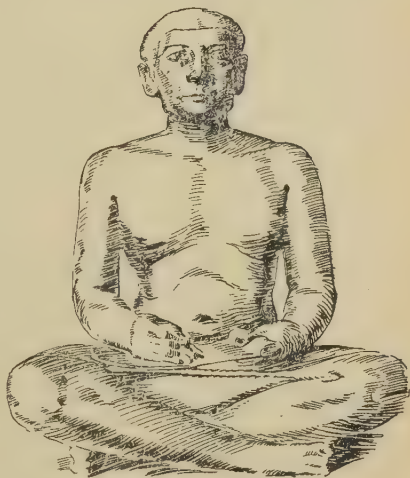


FIG. 51. Portrait statue—the Scribe.

is advanced, for it is tiring to stand for long with both feet together. The lady Nefert sits in the Cairo Museum, to all appearance, from a little distance, a living figure. Her alert face with its plump chin, her lips slightly parted, her crystal-line eyes glowing with unearthly light, and the jewellery round her neck, all tell of the infinite pains with which sculptor, painter and jeweller collaborated (Fig. 50). The scribe in the Louvre sits cross-legged waiting for the next words to be dictated, as he must have sat in actual life (Fig. 51). The carved wooden figure of the so-called "Sheik-el-Beled" stands wand in hand, as if marshalling a court procession,

double chinned and full of official pomp (Fig. 52). The diorite statue of Khafra (or Cephren) seated on his throne with right hand clenched, seems about to issue a command until one looks behind and sees the hawk, symbol of the god Horus, spreading its protecting wings like a cowl (Fig. 53).



FIG. 52. Portrait statue of an official.

The intensely hard stone, which turns our steel tools, was chosen for its durability and incited the sculptor to an unmatched finish of form and texture, although, strangely enough, the finished surface was covered with a coat of plaster (!) which the painter afterwards proceeded to colour. It was not so much a collaboration as a division of labour.

No statue of Khufu, the builder of the greatest Pyramid, has been found, but a tiny portrait in ivory has come to light (Fig.

54). In this great work of art (although only a morsel of bone) there is as much vitality, care for the portrait and feeling for character as could be put into a life-sized head. Looking at it we can understand the building of the Great Pyramid, for the features express the relentless energy and determination of the ruler which we might have inferred from a consideration of the difficulties attending the construction of the immense tomb.

Even the Greeks never attained such a realism of feature as was achieved by the sculptors of the Old Kingdom, and in Egypt there was a falling away all through the later periods. In the head of the "Sheik-el-Beled" the small ear, rightly placed, should be noted and the natural modelling of the eye, the lower lid well tucked in below the upper at the outer corner. Later, the ear became huge and was placed too high, while the eye degenerated to a mere symbol. The otherwise lifelike head of Queen Nefretiti is disfigured by her enormous ears (Fig. 71). For continued existence, there must be food, clothing, shelter and all the pursuits and relaxations enjoyed by the deceased during his lifetime. The smooth plaster walls of the mastaba cell or chapel suggested that ghostly provision might be afforded by reliefs and paintings as well as by actual food, quantities of which were carefully packed and deposited within the tomb. The life of the dead man, his place at the table, his interviews with his bailiff, his hunting and other pleasures are all depicted in clear-cut line and definite colour. It was



FIG. 53. Khafra.



FIG. 54. Khufu.

considered important that every stage of the food supply, from the growing of grain and rearing of cattle to the cooked food on the table, should be set out in detail. In these scenes artless and delightful figures and incidents are often introduced, making the life of these ancient times live again before our eyes. In Plate VII we see an episode of life in the Old Kingdom. The boat-

men are energetically spearing the river creatures while the master looks on. The tall stems of the papyrus make a delicately reeded background, and in their tops are nesting birds molested by four-footed prowlers. Somewhat later, another device, to ensure still further the welfare of the occupant of the tomb, consisted in modelling or carving figures, singly or in groups, all engaged in useful occupations, such as tending cattle, weaving or kneading dough (Fig. 55). A whole regiment of archers or spear-men was at the disposal of a prince or noble. One looks at these lively little figures painted in their natural colours, amazed at the material outlook of the Egyptian mind, and



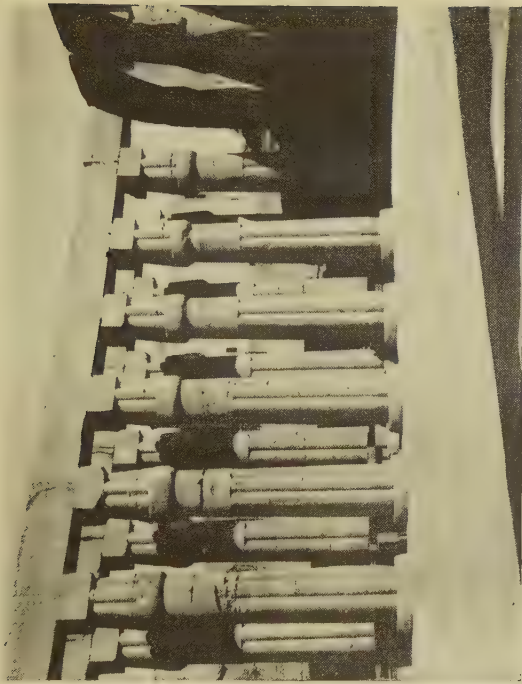
FIG. 55. A tomb "worker."

regretting that these toys were not given to the children to play with instead of being hidden away in the dark, although only thus have they been preserved to us. In the later dynasties it became customary to place within the grave little figures of blue-

glazed pottery, of which numbers are to be seen in every museum. These ushabtis or "answerers," when the dead man was called upon to arise and work in the fields of heaven, *answered*, offering themselves as substitutes. The ancient Egyptian gentleman was evidently too proud, or too afraid of losing caste, even after death, to soil his hands with useful toil.

Why is it that the lifelike statues of the Old Kingdom are so different in character from the figures on the wall reliefs? Why, in the first, should the forms be so true to life and, in the second, childish in conception and arrangement?

To answer these questions we must remember that realistic pictures representing the world as the eye sees it were not possible until perspective was worked out during the Italian renaissance. A modern picture (unless it is a very modern one) presupposes a view from a fixed point at a given moment



(1) THE NAVE OF LUXOR
(2) COURT OF LOTUS BUD COLUMNS AT LUXOR

(1) The capitals are more refined in their contour than those of Karnak. Beyond the nave is an open court (2) with a cloister of lotus bud columns. The arch at the end of the vista was cut during the Christian era and formed the apse of a church

of time, whereas the Egyptian artist passed from one episode to another, from sowing to harvest, in one picture. Then again, he was not concerned with foreshortening, representing one figure behind another, or with parallel lines receding from the eye, obsessed as he was with reality. He drew very much as children draw; he tried to depict *all* the person or object, and adopted a convention which was not departed from throughout the whole course of Egyptian art. Instead of perspective, the field of the picture was divided into bands or registers. If two men were to be represented side by side, one would be placed immediately



FIG. 56. Temple officials cutting up an ox. The left hand figure wields a flint knife, as seen in Fig. 44.

above the other. In Fig. 49 all the men pulling on the ropes are supposed to be on the same level. The face is always in profile, but the eye is frontal, as are the shoulders, although the legs always appear in side view (Fig. 61). Not until Greek art had come to its full expression was such a problem attempted as an eye in profile. Within their limitations, however, the Egyptians produced a mass of vivacious and entertaining work, and when they had to depict energetic action their mannerisms are hardly noticeable (Fig. 56). Sculpture in the round could be achieved, thus early, because, in a sense, there are no limitations. A sculptor made his figure, viewing it from front, back and side; and given time and a determination to obtain likeness, success in realism was certain.

Near the Pyramids of Gisa are a statue and a temple. The latter is obviously connected with the Pyramid of Khafra, for a passage-way leads slantingly from the one to the other. The statue is the Sphinx. This monument greatly interested Greek visitors ; they were impressed by its immense size, and invested it with an air of mystery, of unplumbed depths of riddles and questionings, to which it really made no claim. The Sphinx needed no fictitious interest ; it is the largest of man monsters. It is an example of the audacious imagination and energy of the Egyptian sculptors, for it is carved out of

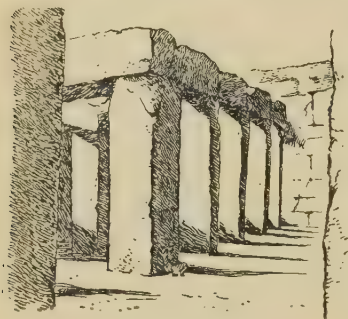


FIG. 57.
Temple of Khafra as at present.

a ridge of limestone jutting from the hillside. Quite recently the whole of it, including its great outstretched paws, has been cleared of the sand which is always accumulating round it (Plate VIII).

The temple of Khafra, close by the Sphinx, now appears but the foundations of a building, for the sand has covered it, and only the interior has been cleared. It is an early

example of the method of building employed by the Egyptians in erecting their temples, that of the *beam and lintel* (Fig. 57). This temple, it should be noted, was built ages before Stonehenge, but the method is the same ; great square monoliths support horizontal beams, but while the stones of the British shrine are only roughly surfaced, here were granite and alabaster, pillars, roof and floor worked true, and polished (Fig. 58). Unlike the later temples, these surfaces were left perfectly plain, with no enrichment or inscriptions, so that the twenty-three statues of Khafra placed within must have had a perfect background. In the diagram is seen the method of lighting, by slits just below the flat roof, which gave quite enough light. There is no need in Egypt for a gabled roof. One of the most ludicrous

buildings imaginable is a modern house built within sight of the Pyramids, with a steeply-pitched roof, waiting for the snow which never falls there !

After the great achievements of the Old Kingdom there came a decline. The later Pyramids dwindled in size and quality of material. With the Vth Dynasty the relief carving and painting degenerated, and the hieroglyphics became almost unintelligible. Some-

thing had happened in the land, possibly civil war for long years. This is a "dark age," and even the records of the dynasties are obscure. But an age of decline always merges into a period of revival. By the XIIth Dynasty Egypt had completely recovered herself, and was, perhaps, at her most prosperous level. This period is known as the Middle Kingdom. Art revived, but how changed from that of the early dynasties. No longer were artists looking at nature ; their

work had become mannered and formal. When in the XIth Dynasty the artists had been again called upon for renewed efforts, they turned to the works of their predecessors ; they became copyists and imitators, and this formalism continued while Egyptian art lasted, except for one brief phase, that of the heretic King Akenhaten.

Owing to continued disturbances in the Delta region, the court had been moved to Thebes, nearly four hundred miles up the Nile. During this era of prosperity great temples were erected at Thebes and elsewhere, but of these but few traces are found, owing mainly to the zeal of the

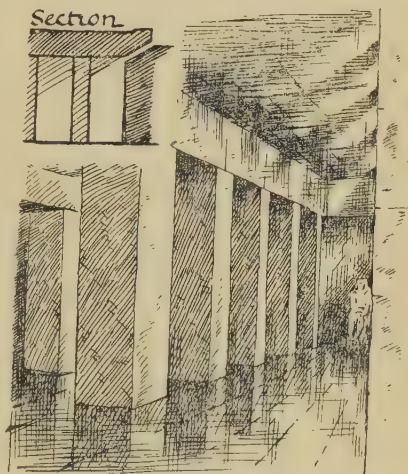


FIG. 58. Temple of Khafra restored.
Note the light from the ceiling slits.

monarchs of the next period, who destroyed the ancient temples and erected new edifices on the sites. The great Labyrinth of Amenemhet, after being used as a quarry for ages, is now only a bank of chips so extensive that one can hardly believe it artificial.

Jewellery was made in Egypt in pre-dynastic times, and early in the Old Kingdom the goldsmiths were adepts, and could beat up the gold, chase it, and solder perfectly. But the

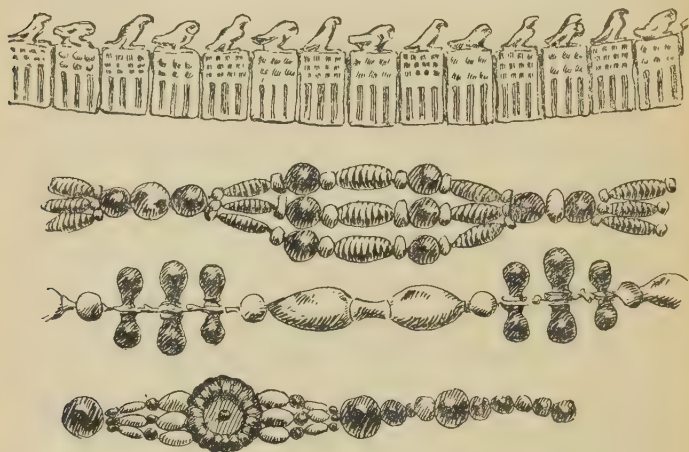


FIG. 59.

Four bracelets from the arm of a princess of the First Dynasty.

finest work of all comes from the tombs of the XIIth Dynasty. The jewel room of the Cairo Museum is an amazing display of bracelets, pendants, diadems and pectorals, all taken from the wrappings of the dead (Figs. 59, 60). The symbolism, of hawk and asp, winged globe, god, conqueror and captive, which the goldsmith had to employ, seems to have spurred him to cunning arrangements and proportions. The workmanship is superb, and the lapis lazuli and other precious stones fit perfectly into the cells and spaces. Enamel was apparently unknown. A relief of the Old Kingdom depicts the goldsmith's work (Fig. 61).

On the left precious substances are being weighed in scales, and a scribe makes a record ; next are men with reeds heating a furnace, not, as sometimes supposed, blowing glass. On the right are men beating out gold-leaf with hammers without handles. The middle register exhibits specimens



FIG. 60. A gold diadem.

of the work, and below, the collars, chains and emblematic ornaments are being put together and finished. Four of the workers are dwarfs.

Fig. 63 represents two men drilling out the interior of the stone vases already referred to, but here these are much larger in size. The workers seem to be holding bags, perhaps of wet sand, to weigh down the drill. The left hand man turns

his drill, the other rotates the vase. The hieroglyphics represent the workers as engaging in conversation, each praising his own work. The task would seem to require much care and patience; some bowls are so thin that the walls are translucent.

Before the close of the Middle Kingdom, the Pyramid tombs had been abandoned. Although the entrances had been blocked up and ingenious devices prepared for outwitting despoilers, yet it does not cause surprise that the ingenuity and tenacity of those who coveted the gold and jewels which formed part of the funerary equipment were equal to their



FIG. 61. Goldsmiths at work.

task. Pyramids and mastabas alike were entered and robbed, sometimes directly they were sealed.

So prince and noble turned to the desert cliffs which tower above the valley, in the vain hope that there their bodies might lie undisturbed. They hewed chambers in the solid rock, which in their shape and arrangement were as like as might be to the dwelling-houses of the living. At Beni Hassan are a series of such rock-cut tombs, of which the facades are upheld by columnar supports of undisturbed rock, such as are commonly left standing in the limestone quarries. These pillars have been dressed with chamfered edges, and have been called the prototype of the Greek Doric order. But, as already remarked, the fine masonry of the IIIrd Dynasty is nearer in type to the Greek. The walls of these cave-tombs

are covered with paintings representing in detail the daily life of the period of the Middle Kingdom.

After the XIIth Dynasty there was another period of decline. Of the XIIIth Dynasty we know but little, although the excavators at Madamud, a little north of Karnak, are uncovering the site of a great sanctuary, with a sacred pool; and statues and inscribed blocks have been discovered. This second age of darkness, for again the records are obscure, while the arts dwindled and deteriorated, was caused by the invasion of the Hyksos or so-called Shepherd Kings, nomadic Semitic tribes entering the Delta from the north-east. They brought with them the horse and chariot; both the animal and the wheel seem to have been unknown in Egypt before this period. In the Old Kingdom, a horizontal turntable had been used for pottery, but this, although revolving on a pivot, need not have been circular in shape. The horse was called "the ass of the East," for till then donkeys had been used as beasts of burden, and in the early reliefs great herds of these animals are represented. The expeditions by land must have required numbers of them. Eventually the Hyksos usurpers were expelled by Ahmose, who founded the XVIIIth Dynasty, and with it the New Kingdom, and whose date of accession, 1580 B.C., is the earliest in Egyptian chronology agreed upon by the archæologists.

This dynasty marked the appearance of Egypt as a great military power. Constant internal warfare had bred a race of warlike chiefs, while the people, for ages disciplined to a common end—the building of great monuments—and subject to an organisation necessarily much the same as the military, marshalled in companies and squads for the hauling of huge



FIG. 62. Head in gold of a hawk, representing the god Horus. The head plumes denoting the deity have disappeared.

blocks of stone, and giving precise obedience to the word of command, furnished levies already efficient in the essentials of mass formation. Thus the Egyptian forces had a great advantage over populations not so well trained. Tutmose III, the Egyptian Napoleon, would have thought a season wasted without a foreign campaign; and year after year, he enlarged his conquests, until he received tribute from countries as far apart as Nubia and Babylonia. Treasure and slaves poured into Egypt; every conquered country yielded what it possessed of greatest value. Of this wealth,

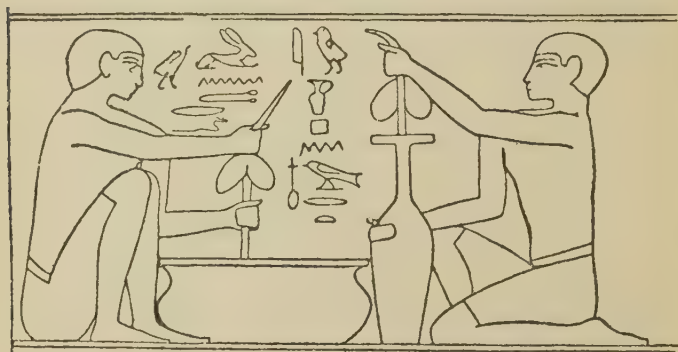


FIG. 63. Hollowing out stone vases.

the gold had perforce to be used in the service of art, for there was nothing else to be done with it. To-day, gold is obtained with much the same difficulty and toil as in the days of ancient Egypt, being washed from the sand of streams or extracted from rock by crushing and grinding, but as soon as acquired, is again put underground out of sight in the vaults and cellars of banks! In Egypt of the XVIIIth Dynasty, and much later, however, gold had not been conceived as currency; symbol of Hathor the Mother Goddess, it was used as ornament, on buildings, furniture, the person and, not least, the decoration of the funerary equipment.

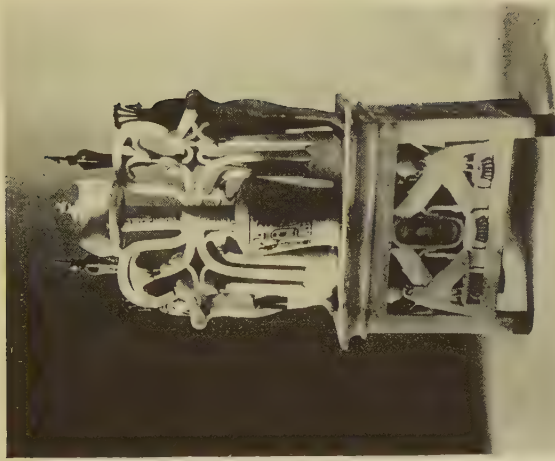
The principal wealth which accrued to Egypt at this period was labour, in the form of captives from Asia and Nubia; and now the fertility of the Nile valley, vastly increased by

(1)



Plate X

(2)



(1) SHRINE OF TUTANKHAMEN

(2) A PERFUME VASE FROM THE TOMB
OF TUTANKHAMEN

From photographs by Mr. Harry Burton of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Copyright strictly reserved.



FACADE OF THE GREATER TEMPLE OF ABU-SIMBEL
The best view point is from the Nile



AVENUE OF RAM-SPHINXES AT KARNAK
Cliché Éditions Albert Morancé, Paris

the experience of ages of irrigation, came to the aid of art, for the erection of great monuments cost little more than food and drink and the barest of shelter. As for clothing, down to this period, even the king on his throne wore nothing but a kilt. The raw material—stone and granite—lay in the quarry beds, and needed but to be fetched. The Empire, then, was a period when several conditions met to bring about an intense constructive activity; the labour, the wealth, the material and skilled direction were all there, and what one sees in Upper Egypt is the result of that conjunction. Unfortunately, the taste, although not the skill, had declined. Gold was plastered everywhere and ornament ran riot. The period might be compared with the resplendent, grandiose style of Louis XIV. If we could see the art of the Old and Middle Kingdoms beside that of the New Kingdom or Empire as we know it from the tomb of Tutankhamen, the earlier work would prove to be more restrained, finer in line and perhaps of better finish. Certainly, the later temples were run up hurriedly, without proper foundations, and the enormous weights have caused sinking, with disastrous results.

The temples of the Middle Kingdom had fallen into disrepair during the long period of conflict, and plans were now made for rebuilding on a magnificent scale. Whole regiments of slaves were allotted to the service of these temples in building, and armies marched to distant quarries for material, cutting huge blocks of stone up to one thousand tons from the solid rock, roughly shaping them into colossal statues or obelisks, and transporting them on sledges by road to the river. These sledges with their loads were placed on barges on arriving at the river bank, all tasks that only iron discipline and resourceful direction could bring to a successful issue.

Before even the great block was wholly cleared from its natural bed, masons were at work on it with stone mauls, bruising off the waste stone into the shape of statue or obelisk, so that no unnecessary weight should be inflicted on the haulers. Some of these partly worked figures still attached to the rock may be seen in the quarries (Plate XIV). Economy was practised and the saw-cuts down the face

of the quarries exhibit extraordinary care and nicety of measurement.

Religious belief had for long been involved and complex, with a corresponding growth of ritual. The priests acquired power and wealth, and the temples became great enclosures of halls and courts with secluded apartments for the secret rites. A sacred lake for ablutions was a feature of the temple garden. Outside were avenues of sphinxes leading to the main portals or pylons of the temple. An avenue of great rams stretched from the temple at Luxor to the great temple at Karnak, nearly two miles apart; many of the great beasts on their bases still line the road, although in all stages of dilapidation (Plate XI).

The temples of Karnak are disappointing at the first view, for they have no advantage of site, rising as they do from the wide, flat floor of Egypt. Nowadays, too, they are blocked up by mud villages and groves of palms. Luxor even has a mosque within it and buildings right against its entrance pylons, while the vast masses of debris and ruinous pylons of Karnak puzzle and disconcert the visitor. Both these temples were commenced in early days, were rebuilt by one monarch, whose work was partly destroyed and added to by another, with fresh additions and alterations by a third, much in the way that a mediæval cathedral has grown. But the main idea of the Egyptian temple of this and all following periods was always the same. A great portal of two massive towers or pylons led into an open court from which one entered a many columned, or as it is called, hypostyle hall. Beyond, the halls became smaller and more secluded in accordance with the more exclusive and secret ritual practised in them. Such apartments have usually no windows; the sunlight on the threshold of the entrance gave enough light, although the great hall at Karnak is lit by a clerestory of openings with mullions or upright bars which look strangely mediæval.

Around the whole of this mass of courts and halls ran a wall boxing in the temple, so that from the outside there was but little to see, save the great pylons towering up, the planning being almost entirely for internal effect (Plate XIV).

Karnak takes hours even to traverse its mazes of courts and



FIG. 64. The nave of Karnak, once roofed over with great slabs.
Compare with the nave of Luxor in Plate IX.

apartments. It owes its fame especially to the great hypostyle hall of Tutmose III, completed by Rameses II. The flat roof of the nave of this hall was upheld by twelve great columns with bell-shaped papyrus capitals. The columns are seventy feet in height and twelve feet through at the base, while a hundred men, as Prof. Breasted says, could find room

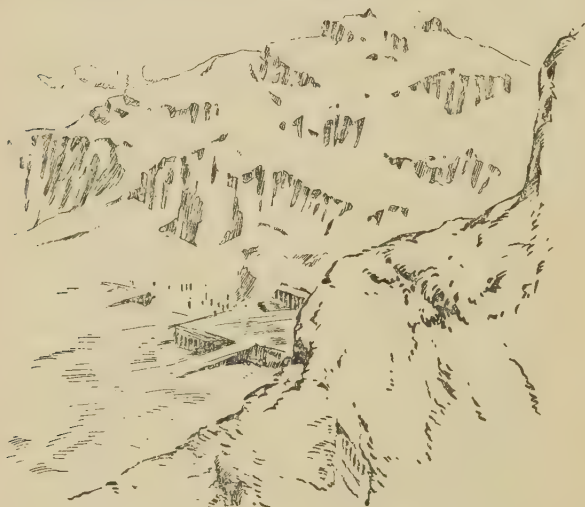


FIG. 65. Looking down on the terraces of Der-el-Bahri. In the foreground is the entrance to a subterranean tomb.

to stand on the top of the capital. On either side of this nave, at a lower elevation, the roof of the hall is supported by seven rows of lotus bud capitals. One receives the impression that there is greater bulk of column than space between, indeed it is quite impossible to see the vast extent of the floor more than nine hundred feet wide. One seems lost in a forest of columns receding into an apparently unlimited space. All this area of column and wall surface was covered with carved and painted reliefs recording the temple history, the national deities with their appropriate ritual, and on the

outer walls the exploits of the rulers. At Luxor the long nave of columns, far more refined in contour than those of Karnak, but less in height by twenty feet, stands alone (Plate IX). It was erected by Amenhotep III, but the fast thickening difficulties of the country prevented Akenhaten's successors from building a hypostyle hall around the nave. They had to be content with a low retaining wall. It must have been the sight of this avenue which incited Rameses II to build at Karnak a greater nave than that of the great Amenhotep.

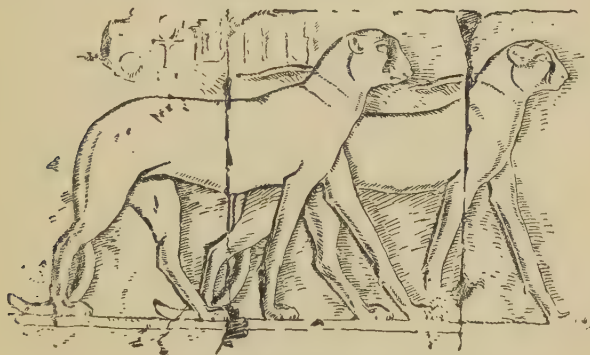


FIG. 66. The action has been noted correctly.

Perhaps the most interesting figure of the XVIIIth Dynasty is that of the energetic Queen Hatshepsut, the wife of Tutmose III, and the first notable woman in the world's history. She built her triple-terraced sepulchral temple under the cliffs at Der-el-Bahri (Fig. 65). Here are finely carved and painted reliefs, with animals lifelike in proportions and movement (Fig. 66). Unfortunately, an early colony of monks settled there and many of the wall paintings were defaced by them. Nothing reveals more clearly the priest-ridden character of Egyptian art, its firmly fixed traditions and minutely prescribed attributes, than the fact that the Queen is represented on the reliefs, wearing the ceremonial false beard!

On the walls of the colonnade are scenes depicting the famous expedition sent by the Queen to Punt by sea in quest

of myrrh trees and other merchandise (Fig. 67). The ships, having reached their destination, lie by the quayside, taking in their cargoes. The trees, carefully packed, are being carried on deck. Tame baboons walk about, or sit among the baggage. The myrrh trees were planted in the temple court, now shadeless and desolate.

As the thirtieth year of her reign approached the Queen determined to signalise it by gifts to the temple at Karnak of two enormous obelisks of granite, and her architect, Senmut, proceeded to the first cataract with an army of workmen. Seven months later, the huge masses had been cut out, each a single block, and, fastened to their sledges, had been packed on barges and towed to the quay at Thebes in August when the river was high, so that they could be landed without difficulty. Each was over ninety-seven feet in height and weighed three hundred and fifty tons. They appear to have been covered with electrum, a mixture of gold and silver, and on her reliefs the Queen records that she measured out not less than twelve bushels of the precious metals. One of these shafts still stands erect on the spot where it was first set up, minus, of course, its metallic decoration.

After her death, her husband, Tutmose III, who apparently had been kept in the background by his dominating spouse (the facts are not clear), revenged himself by chiselling out her name from her reliefs. The inscription on her obelisk was covered up with masonry, which, however, has fallen down, revealing her cartouche once more.

At the close of the reign of Tutmose III, Egypt as an empire was at her zenith. The wealth of the nations poured into the markets of the Delta. The Syrian envoys appeared periodically with their tribute at the quays of Thebes.

Amenophet III erected his mortuary temple in the plain west of the Nile, a little in advance of the other temples. Nothing remains save the two colossal statues, and a great stele buried in the earth. The sanctuary seems to have been one of the finest of all the temples of this category, but a later king, Merneptah, succeeding to the throne in advanced age, and therefore without sufficient time to build himself a mortuary temple in the ordinary way, treated Amenophet's edifice as a quarry, broke down its walls, and sawed its lesser

statues into blocks for his own building. He did likewise with the monuments of his father, Rameses II, who, however, had set him the same bad example.

Riding across the fertile plain covered at Christmas with the vivid green of young barley, the two "colossi" seen in the distance are dwarfed by the hills behind them. It is not until one is fairly close that they reveal their height and mass (Fig. 68). Detail of workmanship has disappeared, owing to the weathering of the stone and perhaps the stupid violence of the Arabs, who for centuries have mutilated anything in the nature of an image. These faceless seated monolithic statues,

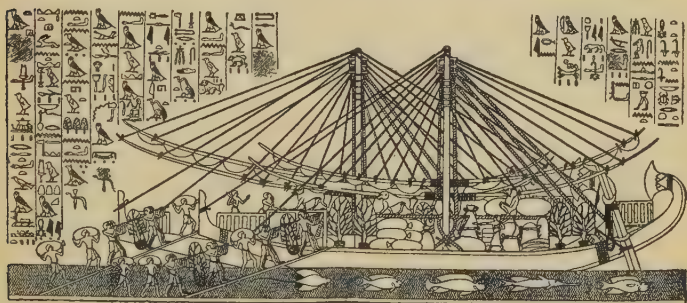


FIG. 67. Hatshepsut's ships being loaded for the return journey.

seventy feet high before they had lost their crowns, are yet vastly impressive even in their forlorn position without the architectural setting to which they owed their existence. They were standing thus when the Greeks visited them to hear the musical note which the northern statue emitted when the rays of the morning sun shone upon it, until it fell, and although restored by the Emperor Severus, it sang no more. Greek and Latin inscriptions, some in verse, cut upon the legs of the figure, testify to the interest taken in the colossus in classic times. Among others the great Trajan, and Hadrian, that restless traveller, visited the spot.

These enormous figures mark a stage in the monarchical idea. Already in the Middle Kingdom colossal figures of Amenemhet III had been set up before the temple. The

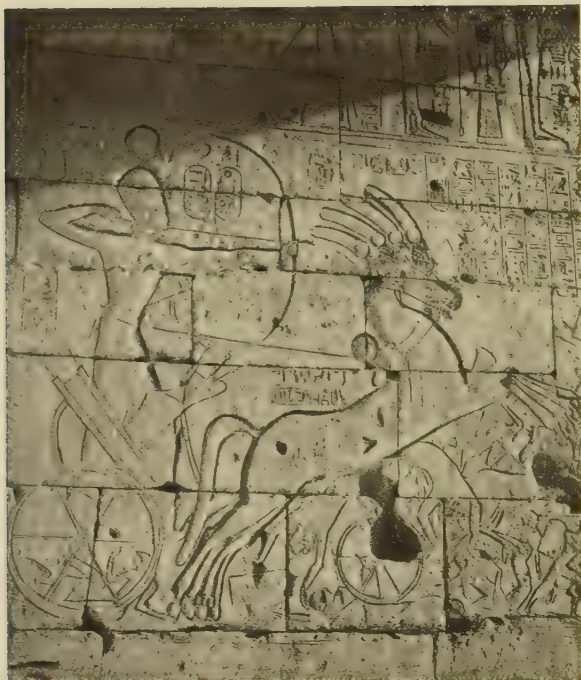
King no longer allowed his portrait statues to be immured in the recesses of the tomb. He had ceased to be a remote, aloof figure-head. Continued conquest had given him immense prestige, and he sat in his court before an assembly of generals, ambassadors and envoys, a great emperor, although he was careful to attend the temple regularly and go through the prescribed rites, for to the people he was still what all the kings had been before him, a god, to be wor-



FIG. 68. The colossi of Amenhotep III.

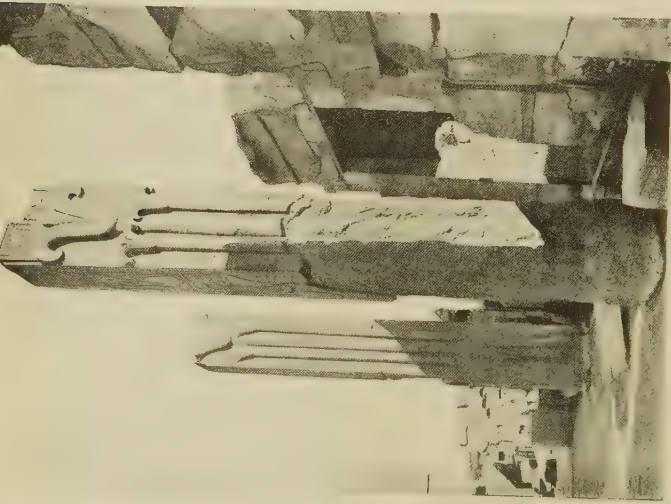
shipped. Therefore, his statues stood before the temple and, as figures of life, or even heroic size, would have been dwarfed by the great pylons, the statues had to be enlarged gigantically to enable them to hold their own against their setting.

During the Empire, Thebes, the capital, bestrode the Nile, east and west. On the east bank were the great temples of the god Amen at Luxor and Karnak, and on the far side of the river, near the margin of cultivation, was the line of mortuary temples of which Medinet Habu, the Ramesseum, and the sanctuary of Seti I still stand. Behind these temples, on rising ground, is the necropolis or tomb city of the nobles,



A relief on the walls of the Ramesseum, representing
Rameses II in his famous charge at Kadesh in Syria. This is
an example of sunk relief. Compare with Plate VII.

Cliché Édition Albert Morancé, Paris



GRANITE PILLARS OF TUTMOSE III

The finely worked motives of the papyrus and lotus are an allusion to the union of the North and South in early times.

Cliché Éditions Alphonse Mucha



RAMESES AS A YOUTH

The beard, of course, is false, fastened on as part of the garb proper for a King and God

and beyond this in a rocky amphitheatre are the remains of the terraced temples of Mentuhotep and Hatshepsut, the great sandstone cliffs towering above. On the other side of the cliffs, but miles distant by road, lie the subterranean Tombs of the Kings. On the fertile plain, nearer to Thebes, stand the two great statues of Amenhotep III (Fig. 69).

All this colossal energy poured out in a cold frenzy of



FIG. 69. Temples and tombs of Thebes.

monumental work is thus concentrated in an area of a square mile or so, exhibiting more evidence of man's ambition and power, in the past, than in any other spot in the world.

Towards the close of the XVIIIth Dynasty, a strange break in the continuity of Egyptian tradition and art occurred. The heir of Amenophet III, known as Amenhophet IV, one of the first individual personalities the world has known, renounced the ancient religion, and suppressed the powerful cult of the god Ammon or Amen, whose temples at Luxor, Karnak and elsewhere he closed. He scattered the priest-

hood, and chiselled out the cartouche of Amen from every inscription, and as his own name contained the hated sign, he changed it to Akenhaten. What substitute had he for Amen and his observances? Akenhaten raised up a new god, or rather he took one of the many gods of Egypt—the sun—which was also a deity of the north Syrian peoples, then tributary to Egypt. Princesses from those lands had married into the Egyptian royal line, and Akenhaten may have learned somewhat of the worship of the solar god from his mother and his wife. His god was the personification of the sun's vital power, its life-giving and supporting rays, the sun as the source of all growth and energy. Akenhaten decided to escape from the associations of the Amen-tainted capital. He left Thebes and built himself a new city, further north, at Tel-el-Amarna, on a plateau surrounded by desert cliffs, a city where excavation has revealed the open air spirit of the new religion. All the temples are open to the sun, which poured down its rays into the unceiled courts.



FIG. 70. Portrait of Akenhaten.

The change of thought was reflected in the art. There is a return to nature; the face and figure of Akenhaten and of his Queen have personality; we see again individual expression, as in the statues of the Old Kingdom. The face of the Queen has a singular beauty with a wistful look, as if she were aware of the forces arrayed against her husband and the disorders developing unchecked on the borders of the empire (Fig. 71 and Frontispiece). The painting of the two little Princesses actually exhibits traces of modelling or graduation of tone, an attempt to secure roundness and solidity, perhaps the earliest example of realism (Fig. 72). Even the clever, contemporary painters of Crete were content with flat tones. The floors of the palace at Tel-el-Amarna (and of earlier palaces) were painted with free and lively compositions, wherein animals and birds in their natural colours and characteristic attitudes moved in their proper

surroundings. Even here is to be seen a mixture of conventions. In Fig. 73, the realistic forms of the ducks look odd against the zigzags which were still used to represent water. On the other hand, there are no contradictions in the horse's head from Tel-el-Amarna (Fig. 74). It is free in treatment and might have been done during the best Greek period, although hundreds of years earlier.

After Akenhaten's death the priests of Amen regained their power. Luxor and Karnak were restored to their former state, and the damage wrought by the iconoclast ruler was repaired where possible. Akenhaten's own name and title was erased from sculptured monuments and in documents he is referred to as "the heretic," or "the criminal." This is the period



FIG. 71. A subtle profile very difficult to draw. It should be compared with the frontispiece.

in which occurred the death of the youthful Tutankhamen, and, as we know, he was buried with the old Egyptian rites.

On the death of the sovereign, the corpse was subjected to mummification, a process of extraordinary complexity, and demanding some time for its completion, especially in the later periods. Meanwhile elaborate carved and painted cases for the mummy were prepared, one surrounding another and the whole enclosed in a sarcophagus, which in its turn

was placed within a series of shrines elaborately decorated with gold and glazed work, or rather these shrines, prepared in sections, were built up around the coffin when in its last resting-place. After services in the temple of Karnak, the funeral cortège was ferried across the river to the mortuary temple which had already been built for the purpose during the king's lifetime, and there the prescribed rites were performed. Afterwards, the procession reformed and set out



FIG. 72. Sketch from the painting.

through a valley winding between the hills, a valley arid and barren, where no herb grows, yet tenanted by living creatures as desert chats and wheatears; an occasional fox slinks into a hole or a hawk fans overhead. The sides of the valley become more rocky and precipitous, until it widens into an amphitheatre surrounded by columned cliffs with the peak of the "Horn" above (Fig. 76). In this space the tombs of the kings were excavated, in passages descending obliquely, sometimes for hundreds of feet, and widening at intervals into halls and chambers. So close together do these tombs lie that in more than one case the direction of the



FIG. 73. Ducks with water-lily or lotus.

passage had to be changed to avoid penetrating a neighbouring tomb. Tutankhamen's burial chamber, perhaps because he died young, and there was necessity for hurry, is small and mean compared with that of Seti I, one of the most extensive and beautifully painted. One enters this tomb and descends several flights of steps and inclined corridors for over a hundred yards. In a pillared hall at the far extremity of the tomb lay Seti's magnificent alabaster sarcophagus, now in Sir John Soane's museum, in London.

The chambers were painted (no longer chiselled in relief) with scenes representing the pathway of the deceased through the underworld, the serpents guarding the portals, and the protecting deities. The monsters and demons he might



FIG. 74.

encounter were depicted, and to enable the ghostly traveller to pass these in safety, the walls were inscribed with magic texts and charms taken from the "books of the dead," the whole set out in clear picture and script, so that the dead man should make no mistake.

The discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen revealed in full the great wealth of funerary equipment considered neces-

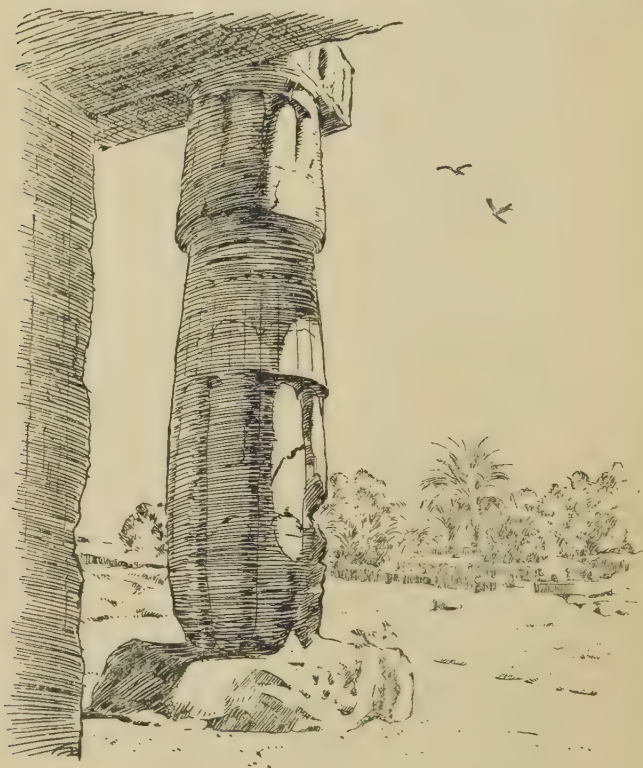


FIG. 75. Porch of mortuary temple of Seti I. In the background is a modern Egyptian village. Kites are wheeling in the air. On the base of the lotus bud column is the hoopoe, a common Egyptian bird.



THE TEMPLE OF EDFU

The great entrance pylons dominate the box-like structure



A SARCOPHAGUS STILL LYING IN ITS GRANITE BED

sary for the interment of a monarch. Up till then, only hints had been obtained from the jumble of fragments left by the ancient and modern tomb robbers, who broke to bits everything which could yield gold or jewels. Never before had the entire outfit been found, even the stools and chairs used by the rulers while an infant. Probably, the



FIG. 76. Valley of the Tombs of the Kings. Just below the wall in the foreground is the entrance to the tomb of Tutankhamen.

young king dying without heir, it was deemed fitting to deposit the whole of his personal effects within the tomb. His chariots were placed in the outer chamber, although they had to be broken to get them in. This was in accordance with the spirit of the interment, for being broken and "dead," they were more likely to be of use to the deceased, and there is evidence that, sometimes, objects placed in a tomb had been "killed" on purpose.

Although the work in the now famous tomb is full of

vitality and lively fancy, with a keen feeling for pattern, yet the complexity of the ornament and the lavish use of gold tell us that the art of the Empire had become meretricious and extravagant.

In Plate X is seen the outer gilded shrine of wood, its open doors revealing the great sarcophagus of crystalline sandstone. At each corner was carved in high relief a protective goddess, Isis,¹ Nepthys, Neith, and Selk, their arms and wings extended. The same figures occur, in low relief, on the inside of the doors. The winged globe appears twice.

Of all the Egyptian rulers, Rameses II emphasised most forcibly his twofold claim of emperor and god. His statues lie everywhere, and much of the less perfect work of his time could have been well spared, for the earlier and more delicate art he so ruthlessly destroyed. His name is seen on every temple, and often the cartouche has been cut over that of a predecessor, which he thus obliterated. Besides his work at Luxor and Karnak may be mentioned the Ramesseum, with the great statues of Osiris standing pilaster-wise. The walls are



FIG. 77. Rameses II.

covered with reliefs of his dashing cavalry exploits at Kadesh, in Syria (Plate XII); within the precincts a thousand-ton colossus of himself lies prone and shattered. Of the many statues of Rameses, only two, the small standing figure behind the Rameses statued court at Luxor (Plate XIII), and the seated figure at Turin (Fig. 77), exhibit personality and individuality of treatment. The Turin statue is remarkable for its delicate beauty, as if among the workers of black granite there still remained a sculptor true to the old traditions. The figure is represented clad in a garment of fine linen minutely pleated, the pleats being worked out with meticulous care. In the British Museum is a small

head in red granite of great charm of expression and precision of workmanship, but this may be the portrait of an earlier ruler (Fig. 78).

A little after 700 B.C. the country came under the rule of the Nubians, who founded the XXVth Dynasty, one which ended with the conquest of the land by the Assyrians.



FIG. 78. The eyes are mere symbols.

Thebes was sacked and never regained its prosperity. Egyptian art steadily declined all through this troubled period, until with the XXVIth Dynasty, the country, under Psamtek I, who freed it from the Assyrian yoke, rose again to a commanding position. The South and North were re-united, although the seat of government had long been transferred to Lower Egypt. This was the last period of artistic activity, and efforts were made to restore the glories of the ancient past. The stereotyped rites and formulas supplied, however, no stimulus, and the sculptors had therefore to

hark back, to exploit the past. They occupied themselves in producing statues in imitation of those of the Old and Middle Kingdoms, following their technique so closely that some

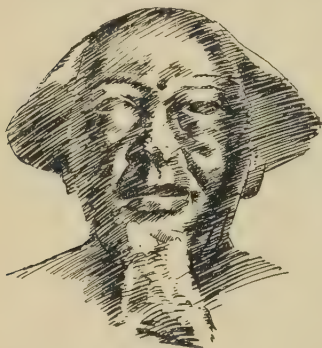


FIG. 79.

Full of character. XXV Dyn.

archæologists attribute all the finely-worked, hard stone statues to the late period (Fig. 79). It has been called the Egyptian Renaissance, but the word does not fit the time, for there was no re-birth, no new ideas demanding new forms and methods.

After this period of prosperity, Egypt again came under the yoke of foreign invaders and was never again, down to the present day, complete mistress of her own territory.

Dominated successively by the Persians, Greeks and Romans, Egypt yet remained for three hundred years the wealthiest of the Mediterranean states, especially when it was governed by rulers like the Ptolemies, who although of Greek descent, yet identified themselves with the national traditions and religion. Great temples as Philæ and Edfu were built, conforming exactly to the old style (Plate XIV). Egyptian art, however, could not endure the impact of foreign ideas. In the attempt to combine divergent motives and symbols, the native art suffered, and waned. Finally, when Theodosius issued his edict in A.D. 324, abolishing the ancient religion, the art so closely connected with it collapsed, and perished.

As we have already pointed out, the dry sands of Egypt have kept its treasures intact for thousands of years and then delivered them up to spoilers or scientific seekers. We know so much about the art of Egypt in comparison with that of other ancient civilisations, that we may be tempted, not indeed, to overrate



FIG. 80.



THE STAIRWAY TO UPPER STOREY OF THE PALACE OF KNOSSOS
The baluster-like columns are restorations. Compare with the pillar on the Lion
Gate in Fig. 101.

Egypt, but to underrate other countries where conditions did not allow of the same preservations of their art. In some arts, Egypt did not shine, as pottery, so that she was glad to get by barter or tribute examples of the fine Cretan ware. The warm sun of the Nile valley kept her from developing the weaving of woollen fabrics as rugs and carpets, although her weaving of fine linen has never been approached. Owing to her conservatism, perhaps, bronze came late to her, and iron also, although the early sculptors and other workers seem to have got on very well without those metals.

Statues and figures in all materials were a necessity, owing to the religious beliefs, but they are none the less often things of beauty.

It has been stated that beauty of line was undreamed of until the Greeks appeared, but Figs. 80, 81 and 82 make it clear that the Egyptian artists had a

keen eye for form. The serving maid is expressed with a delicacy of contour which could not be bettered by a Greek vase painter. The little lady with the enormous wig wears her tightly fitting and elaborately-pleated linen garment with grace and ease, a consummate achievement in woodcarving, and the same may be said of the figure in Fig. 82, which is of bronze, the dress being patterned all over in precious metals.

For writing and drawing, the Egyptian scribe was fortunate in finding in the papyrus a surface suitable both for reed-pen and brush. The paper was not made from the leaves, but from the pith of the triangular sectioned stalk; layers were superimposed at right angles for strength, and then dried under pressure (Fig. 83). The plant was



FIG. 81.



FIG. 82.

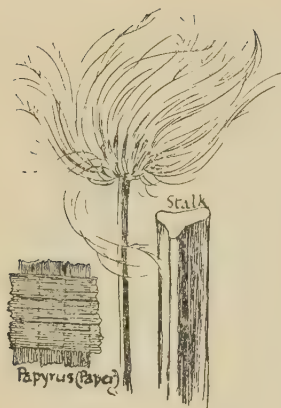


FIG. 83. Papyrus.

ing great ships by the IVth Dynasty, and so was quite at home with woodworking on a large scale. Furniture was well made, and in the Cairo Museum the simpler chairs, chests and boxes are strangely familiar in shape (Fig. 84). The chariot, of imported birch, made for racing, is so light that it can be lifted in one hand. The bronze axle with its six cups for the spokes, all in one piece, is a deft piece of work (Fig. 85).

One feature of the art of Egypt, which is common indeed to all ancient, and to a less extent, modern art, was a persistent symbolism. Almost any object of use, ornament or ritual was given personification, took the form of something alive. The legs of table and chair imitate those of animals; handles of spoons and ladles masquerade as people, much as those of our

carved and painted on the nave capitals of Karnak (Fig. 64).

These represent the flowering papyrus, while the capitals of the smaller columns filling the hall are based on the unopened lotus. The papyrus was the symbol of Lower Egypt and the lotus of the Upper Kingdom. These two plants constantly occur, even in the simplest pattern, corresponding to our decorative use of the rose, shamrock and thistle.

In woodwork, nothing has come down to us from Crete or western Asia, so that we cannot compare these countries with Egypt. But the latter was build-

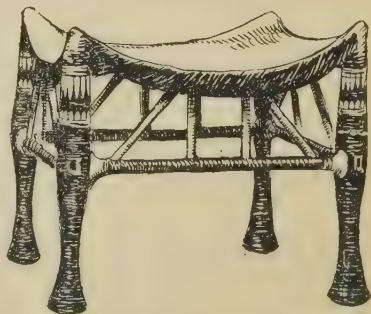


FIG. 84. Stool in ebony and ivory.

"apostle" spoons. Tutankhamen's beds were in the likeness of a cow and lioness goddess respectively. Here, of course, the protective element is apparent, but other items of a king's personal outfit seem to have been burdened with a symbolism relating to his dealings with his enemies. Even

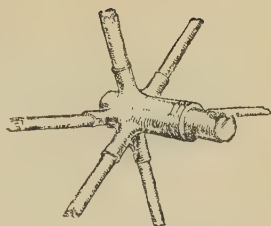


FIG. 85. Axle of Chariot.

on the soles of his sandals were traced figures of bound captives, so that he might tread upon his foes; similar figures crouched round chair and footstool or writhed on the handle of his walking stick. The magic of the old stone age man is apparent here, only transferred from the ensuring of food to the desire for military glory.

On the hollow cavetto of the portals of the temples and on the lintel of doorways was carved or painted the winged sun with the cobras, a sign of good luck like our horseshoe (Fig. 86). The snakes did not represent wisdom as sometimes stated. To the Egyptian they meant death and were associated with monarchy, holding the power of life and death. The wings symbolised protection. Later, the whole was replaced by a vulture with outstretched wings (seen on the top of the vase in Plate X).

Sometimes Hathor, the cow-goddess, was the protecting symbol. The cow seen in Fig. 87 is full size, draped and painted, and is a fine example of animal sculpture, the structure being well understood. The work succeeds, too, in its intention, conveying a sense of the brooding protection of a deity. The head with its crown was once covered with gold.

The magnificent perfume vase seen in Plate X is an elaborate instance of a symbolic idea, that of the union of Upper and Lower Egypt, which, effected in very early times,



FIG. 86. The Winged Globe.

was always kept in memory. On the left the convolutions of the stems terminate in a papyrus head, the emblem of

Lower Egypt, on the right in the lotus of Upper Egypt. The stems are united in a knot tied round the handle, symbolising the union of the "two lands." Two figures of the Nile god, Hapi, support the stems and bear on their heads the papyrus and lotus respectively. They also each support



FIG. 87. The goddess Hathor.

a slender column, round which writhes the cobra, emblematic of kingship. The left hand one bears the crown of Lower Egypt, the right hand that of Upper Egypt. On the mouth of the vase rests the vulture with outstretched wings. On the front of the pedestal, the king's cartouche, in its celestial form, is supported by the hawks of Horus, the terrestrial form being at the back. The whole has been carved from a block of translucent calcite or alabaster, with ornaments of gold, a *tour de force* of craftsmanship, but overweighted with unrelated detail owing to a too obtrusive symbolism.

In Plate XIII are seen the two beautifully carved pillars of Tutmose III, one representing the papyrus and the other the lotus.

Like the other nations, the Egyptians were fond of patterns, on walls and furniture, although not on dress, faithful as they were to their cool white linen. From the brush of ordinary house painters patterns seemed to flow forth in an unending stream, with an ingenious use of a few motives, such as the spiral and rosette. Counterchange patterns especially were



AN ENORMOUS JAR

Some jars had many more handles
than this

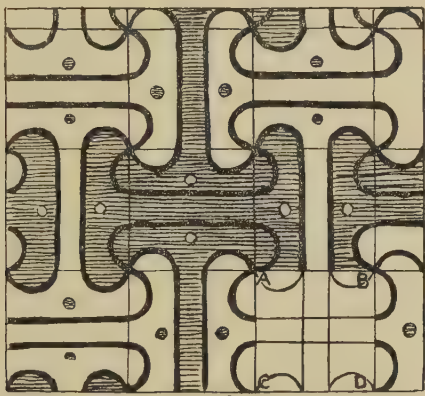
British Museum



A CRETAN "HARVEST-HOME" (?)

A vessel of steatite (a soft stone) with a carved band of figures. The central figure shakes a sistrum or rattle such as were used by Egyptian priests

produced in great variety. The Egyptian house with its borders and over all patterns in a wide range of bright colours must have looked gay and cheerful, while the temples, in addition to colour, blazed with silver and gold plate laid on lavishly.



An ingenious Egyptian counterchange pattern based on the square.

NOTE.—The young student must be prepared for great variations in Egyptian names. Owing to the long life of the Egyptian language many changes took place. The early Greek visitors already referred to caused confusion by their attempts to reproduce the sounds. Lastly, as vowels were omitted from the Egyptian script, these have to be inserted by the translator. Thus a great monarch of the Middle Kingdom is called Senusret, Usertesen or Sesostris. Totmes appears as Thutmose, Tahutmes, Thutmosis, Tutmes or Tutmose. Akenhaten may be Akenaton, Khuenaten or Ikhnaton.

ÆGEAN ART

THE story of the discovery, on the mainland and isles of Greece, of an ancient civilisation, totally forgotten except in the Greek myths of King Minos and the Labyrinth wherein lurked the man-beast Minotaur, of Dædalus, and of Ariadne and Theseus, is the most surprising and interesting in the history of archæological research. The once famous cities of Troy and Mycenæ, overwhelmed and destroyed, remained in oblivion as shapeless mounds and dismantled walls until an enthusiastic explorer commenced his excavations. As a boy Heinrich Schliemann filled his head with stories of buried treasure, and the old Greek tales. Family misfortune forced him at an early age to serve in a grocer's shop, where he weighed butter and sugar, meanwhile dreaming of the siege of Troy. After several attempts to retrieve his fortunes (he had a talent for languages), he was sent to Russia, and at the age of forty had amassed considerable wealth, which he resolved to use in uncovering the bones of the warriors of the heroic age. Depending upon tradition to reveal to him the site of Troy, and against the opinion of students, he attacked the great mound of Hissarlik on the east side of the Dardanelles in 1870, sacrificed a classic temple and buildings on the surface, and cut a great trench right through the mound down to the rock beneath.

One mid-day while excavation was proceeding he noted the glint of gold in a crevice, and sending off the workmen to their meal, he and his wife extracted a compact mass of objects mostly of gold, consisting of diadems and other jewellery, cups and weapons, which had apparently been stored in a wooden box, long since perished. Over £4,000 worth of precious metal was thus acquired, and sent to Berlin, but the removal of so much bullion from their country naturally gave great offence to the Turks, and Schliemann

had the greatest difficulty in gaining permission to excavate again in their territory. He believed he had found Priam's treasure, but really he had discovered the art of a much earlier people. The mound of Hissarlik was afterwards found to consist of nine cities one above the other, the treasure coming from the second city, counting from the bottom.



FIG. 88.

The finds puzzled the scholars, for they were strangely un-Greek in character. The weapons were mostly of copper, and the pottery all hand-made. Nothing here told of classic art, of the finely turned and painted vases, the bronze helmets and weapons of the Greeks. There was nothing resembling even the archaic period of Greek art.

It was true, however, that the Troy of story was in the mound, but the science of archæological excavation being then in its infancy, Schliemann in his eagerness to reach the Homeric city had cut right through it. It was the sixth city,

with great walls which were still further hidden by the rubbish the workmen threw out, rubbish which later excavators had to remove.

Refused permission to excavate in Crete, Schliemann turned his attention to the fortress of Mycenæ on the mainland of Greece. Just inside the famous Lion Gate, he brought to light a great circular space (incidentally again burying suitable areas for excavation). Within the circle he found several pits or shaft-graves and at the bottom of these were the remains of men, women and children with quantities of treasure. There were golden diadems, face masks, pectorals, and jewellery. The body of an infant was wrapped in thin sheets of gold. Hundreds of gold ornaments were picked up, besides objects of silver, bronze, ivory and amber. Near by were found gold cups and a silver vase. The whole, in style, was somewhat akin to the treasure found at Hissarlik, and that there was a connexion between the two sites was obvious. Researches were made far and wide over the mainland and isles of Greece, all the finds corroborating the theory of a pre-Greek Ægean art. Lastly, after the cessation of Turkish misrule, Crete was examined, and at Knossos, Sir Arthur Evans found evidence that in the island was situated the centre and origin of this Ægean civilisation.

Patient exploration on a number of sites made clear much that formerly was obscure, obsessed as scholars had been with the idea that the Greeks were the sole originators of their matchless art and owed nothing to alien blood. It was something of a shock to learn that ages before the true Hellenes had evolved there had flourished an art nearly as fine as, and more brilliant and lively than that of Greece; that people once dwelt in Crete in great palaces equipped with material comforts and conveniences such as bathrooms and sanitary arrangements, including a complete system of drainage beyond the needs of many parts of Europe at the present day.

How did this art arise? When did it originate, and how does it fit in with Egyptian art and that of the Euphrates and Tigris? Although there have been found many incised clay records in the palaces of Crete, they cannot yet be read, although there are indications that they consist of mere inven-

tories of palace stores. That is to say, if even bi-lingual inscriptions may chance to be found as happened in Egypt and Assyria, which would enable the script to be deciphered, we shall not arrive at the history of this people; they had no historians and left no literature; but we can read, from what has been unearthed, the story of their art, the level of their culture and their pursuits, pleasures and ideals.

By piecing together the evidence of the finds, we get some idea of the chronology of Ægean art. From quite early times, Egyptian objects of known date have been found



FIG. 89. The shores of Crete.

in Crete, and Cretan cups and vases in Egyptian tombs of the Middle and New Kingdoms settle the periods of the island culture, and indicate a considerable intercourse in the way of trade. There was of course no money in those days. Commerce was effected by exchange of goods; Egypt may have sent corn or even gold in return for the painted cups and oil of Crete.

Crete is a beautiful island. Behind its rocky coast, the hills rise to high mountains in the interior, with snow patches on their summits even in summer. But being an island and a long narrow one at that, it has no great river systems with wide stretches of alluvial soil ready to grow crops by the mere sowing of seed. As at the present time,

its upland plains yielded wheat and barley, while vineyards and gnarled olives covered the slopes of the hills. Oil in the Mediterranean is a staple food, answering to butter in the north, and we shall see that the olive in ancient Crete was considered an important crop.

Cretan (commonly known as Minoan) civilisation divides into three periods, Early, Middle and Late, corresponding roughly in time to the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and Empire of Egypt. At the bottom of the site of the palace of Knossos are many feet of strata belonging to the stone culture called neolithic, with no metal, but implements of obsidian, a very hard natural glass from Melos. Then copper came, and the Early period grew steadily up, although it does not seem to have made the great and rapid advance achieved during the corresponding period in Egypt.



FIG. 90. Part of a diadem.

But beautiful stone vases were produced, some so thin as to be translucent, and quite as fine as the Egyptian models which had come to Crete perhaps long

before. Another craft which in the early period exhibited a surprising development was that of the goldsmith, work which pointed the way to the naturalism of the painters, for the gold flowers and leaves imitate actual plants, lilies, daisies and crocuses. The delicately wrought diadem found in a VIth Dynasty tomb in Egypt may possibly have been the work of a Cretan goldsmith (Fig. 90).

At the close of the Early Minoan period, the first palace of Knossos was built. Within it was found what appeared to be a small chamber shrine devoted to the worship of the local goddess, but no great temple dominated the vicinity, as in Babylonia and Egypt. The Cretans were not ground down in bondage for the support of their gods, and all their art reveals a love of freedom, such as we might expect of a seafaring people. The palace, with additions and rebuildings, in successive periods became a veritable maze or "labyrinth" of halls and apartments, on either side of a great open court; ultimately it covered an area of five acres. Unlike the

Egyptian and Babylonian palaces of sun-dried brick, it was built, its foundations and lower walls at least, of good stone. It had a wide stone staircase ascending to several storeys (Plate XV). At many points the weight was sustained by cedar pillars of a baluster type, the top being wider than the bottom. The same type of pillar is seen on the Lion Gate of Mycenæ (Fig. 101). It was evidently a sacred symbol like the menhirs and tall stones of western Europe. Frequently occurring, and sometimes in connexion with the pillar, is the sign of the double-axe, an old symbol signifying power and dominion. "Labyrinth" comes from "labrys," a double axe, so the Greek fable of a labyrinthine palace seems to have had some basis in fact.



FIG. 91. Here are forms resembling the Greek anthemion, but used a thousand years earlier.

The characteristic art of the Middle period, apart from the palaces themselves (Phaestos was built during this era), was its pottery. From the earliest times, the Cretans had made excellent pots, and during this period they excelled themselves. Except, perhaps, for some simple contrivances they may have had for turning the work round easily, the pottery was made by hand. The rapidly rotating potter's wheel was not introduced until late in the period, and before then the famous "egg-shell" cups and vases, of a porcelain-like thinness and lightness, had been produced. Unlike earlier ware they were painted with white (and red) on a black surface (Fig. 91). This delicate ware, quite unlike anything seen before, was prized in Egypt, and many examples have

been found in graves of the Middle Kingdom. The rulers of Knossos seem to have kept a "Royal Pottery Stores," to be compared with the Sèvres factory in France. Magazines have been unearthed, with pots piled one upon the other, such as may be seen in the lower floor of some potter's shop in the poorer quarters of Candia to-day. In a corridor were found gigantic



FIG. 92. Cow and Calf in glazed earthenware.

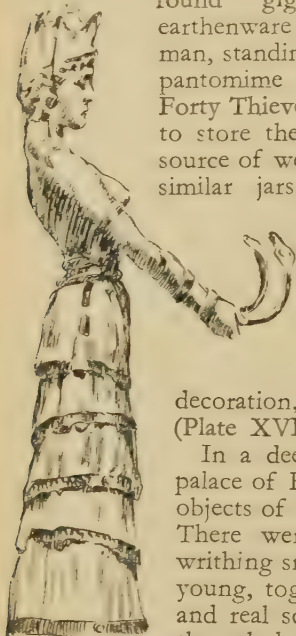


FIG. 93. The Snake Goddess, a statuette in ivory and gold.

earthenware pots, some much taller than a man, standing side by side, as they do in the pantomime scene in "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." These great jars were used to store the olive oil which perhaps was a source of wealth to the palace rulers. Some similar jars found in the second city of Hissarlik contained grain. The largest of the jars of Knossos are many handled for securing the "cats-cradle" of rope which was necessary when moving the pots. This has given the potter his idea for the decoration, a pattern imitating the rope (Plate XVI).

In a deep cist or repository within the palace of Knossos was found a number of objects of coloured and glazed earthenware. There were statuettes of women holding writhing snakes, reliefs of animals and their young, together with models of flying fish, and real scallop shells adorned by painting, the whole suggesting the equipment of a "chamber-shrine," and indicating the worship of the Mother Goddess, and their belief in her care for her seagoing subjects.



FIG. 94. Gathering the autumn crocus. The lighter parts are restorations. Fresco.



FIG. 95. The Chase. Fresco.

The statuettes, and the female figures on the frescoes wear a dress which differs strangely from the pleated linen of the Egyptians, although the flounced robe of the Sumerian may bear some relation to it (Fig. 28). The waist is pinched as if by the severest corset, and the bodice cut very low in front rises high at the back. The skirt is aproned and flounced. It is a garb, at the first glance, almost Victorian and yet in use many hundreds of years before the Greeks wore their flowing draperies (Fig. 93).



FIG. 96. This fresco is enclosed, complete in itself. It is a *picture*. The border is suggestive of the ripples on the sand, and a pebble-strewn strand. The girl holding on to the horns of the great spotted beast will allow herself to be tossed up, and will describe a somersault as her dark-skinned comrade is doing. He will have landed and be ready to catch her. The tail of the bull is a restoration, for this fresco, like all the others, was found in fragments.

Although the upper walls of Knossos were destroyed, yet enough of the painted plaster surface has been picked up and 'restored' by re-designing the gaps, to give an idea of what these frescoes were like. They were really frescoes. The Egyptian wall painting was mere distemper work, the colours being mixed with gum or size, but the Cretans understood that the damp lime fixed the pure colour used without

medium other than water. The painting when dry, would not rub off, for it was not merely an added coat, but had become actually part of the wall. This method was re-discovered by or handed down to later ages, and was the glory of early Italian painting. Thus the Cretans were true wall painters, and the first to paint *pictures*, for the Egyptians and Asiatics had never achieved more than diagrams or bird's-eye



FIG. 97. One of the two gold cups of Vapheio. They are not solid, as sometimes stated, but made of two thicknesses, the outer decorated in repoussé. The bull has overthrown one man and is goring another.

views. The Cretan wall painting, without of course perspective, tells its story much as one might have seen it, as in the gathering of saffron or autumn crocus (Fig. 94). Sometimes the spirit is akin to the far later Japanese; a cat stalks a bird among the herbage (Fig. 95), guardian griffins lie among grasses and lilies, while more remarkable still is the bull-ring scene, where a great spotted bull charging furiously is played with by a lad and two girls, much as a dummy "horse" is used in a gymnasium (Fig. 96). It seems a

corroboration of the old legend that tribute of human beings was exacted from Athens by King Minos.

Youths and maidens *may* have been sent from the mainland and trained to perform these dangerous antics. A fresco from Mycenæ depicts a similar performance, while seals and statuettes portray various episodes all connected with the bull-ring, and recalling the exploits of modern cow-boys. The famous gold cups from Vapheio represent, in repoussé, various incidents connected with the capture of the wild cattle (Fig. 97).



FIG. 98. The Cup-bearer. Fresco.

as freely and sketchily as any modern poster designer. The much damaged figure in fresco of the "cup-bearer," a youth bearing a wine filler is full of vitality and movement (Fig. 98). The carving on a cup in soft stone of harvesters in

In the frescoes there is a lively fancy. Not only the animals and flowers, but minor beauties are worked in; the ripples on the sand, the play of water, everything which had movement and grace, attracted the painters. And most wonderful of all, considering the remoteness of the age, was the emancipation from stiffness and the minute detail of archaism. In suggesting a crowd of ladies, the painter worked

procession, their wooden forks on their shoulders, singing lustily, surprises by its gaiety and freedom (Plate XVI).

In monumental work on a large scale the Cretans took less interest, although there are, belonging to the Late period, fragments in painted relief of a bull and a man, both life-size, which exhibit considerable skill in modelling. A finely carved ivory statuette of the Snake Goddess has been found (Fig. 93), and figures of youths leaping, apparently as part of the bull-game.

Towards the end of the Middle period, the more or less formal patterns on the cups and vases disappeared, for the vase painter, influenced no doubt by the mural artist, was returning to nature. He abandoned the old light on dark for a freer, more naturalistic style of dark on light, a method which enabled him to put down more directly the natural forms which he took pleasure in representing. He was in



FIG. 99. Lily-vase.

close touch with the sea, and round his vases cling seaweed, cuttle fish with waving tentacles, dolphins, and other sea creatures. Or he turned to the land and painted vetches, lilies or the lotus. The lily-vases are quite modern in their feeling for form (Fig. 99). The Cretan designer chose motives which were patterns in themselves; the radiating lines of an insect's wings, or of a flower, the meandering

tentacles of the octopus are themselves design, nature's ornament, needing only to be transferred to the surface to be decorated (Fig. 100).

In the actual manufacture of the pottery, there was a falling away, both in surface and glazing, from the earlier times. The "egg-shell" ware was no longer made; the

fabric had become coarser. The potter's wheel had come to Crete either from the Nile or from Asia, and in giving attention to dispatch, to turning out a quantity of pots, the quality had suffered.

On the Ægean mainland the distinctive art had persisted through the centuries in spite of troubles owing to invasion. In the Troad, the second city of His-sarlik had been raided and burnt, near the end of the Early period of Crete. Unlike Knossos, which suffered a similar disaster (unless it was destroyed by an earthquake), during its Middle period, and



FIG. 100. The pot-painter made a fine informal decoration out of the radiating tentacles of the octopus. He suggested the environment by adding seaweed and a sea-urchin. Fried squid is a common dish on the Mediterranean coasts.

was rebuilt with greater splendour and little break in the continuity of its art, Troy II was completely eclipsed. Its art was stamped out, the following settlements being much lower in culture, and although the sixth city, the actual Troy, with its massive walls covered a much larger area than the second, yet its art merely reflected that of the main-

land cities of Greece. Of these Mycenæ, an old city with an “acropolis” or rock fortress, became rich and powerful, as its “shaft-graves” with their rich equipment, revealed. There is no gold in the rocks of Greece, and all this treasure must have been extracted from elsewhere. The late Minoan style must have influenced Mycenæ, for there was close intercourse between the island and the mainland.

Somewhere about 1450 B.C., Knossos was again destroyed, with an almost complete cessation of its art, and Mycenæ took the lead among the Ægean cities, her influence penetrating by way of trade, through the Mediterranean, and inland to central Europe. There are even signs of Ægean influence in far away Britain, in the form of beads, and the chalk drums in the British Museum. It was during this period that the famous bee-hive tombs were constructed. Tombs foreshadowing these had been made in Crete and as far away as Portugal; at Mycenæ we find the perfected model. In its way the “Treasury of Atreus,” as Schliemann called it, is as worthy of attention as the Great Pyramid. The latter depended on its size to awe the beholder; the subterranean dome impressed by the mystery of its construction, its beautiful shape and, before it was despoiled, by the splendour of its enrichment.

Mycenæ is situated on an eminence, filling a gap between the hills. On one side is a ravine, on the other great walls protected the fortress. One toils up the dusty incline with the stony mountains for background, and at the turn of the road a spring of pure water gushes from the rock. Here, the defenders could defy an enemy without fear of being driven out by drought. A few paces further, and on turning a projecting wall, the famous Lion Gate is before one, as cunningly contrived as any mediæval fortress entrance (Fig. 101). Three enormous slabs form the gate-way, the side walls being built of great blocks, roughly rectangular. This is the “Cyclopean” masonry which the Greeks fancied the work of the one-eyed giant. The triangular recess over the gateway is filled by a great slab, whereon is carved in relief a pillar much like those of Knossos, tapering below, with two heraldic-looking beasts as supporters. Seemingly they are lions or lionesses, but their heads, which were

fastened by bolts, and may have been of metal have disappeared. Representations of lions similarly placed occur on the seals, and Assyrian and Hittite gateways also have lion guardians (Fig. 32). The symbol is found even in the art of early Elam (Fig. 16).

A few paces within the gate is the great circular burying

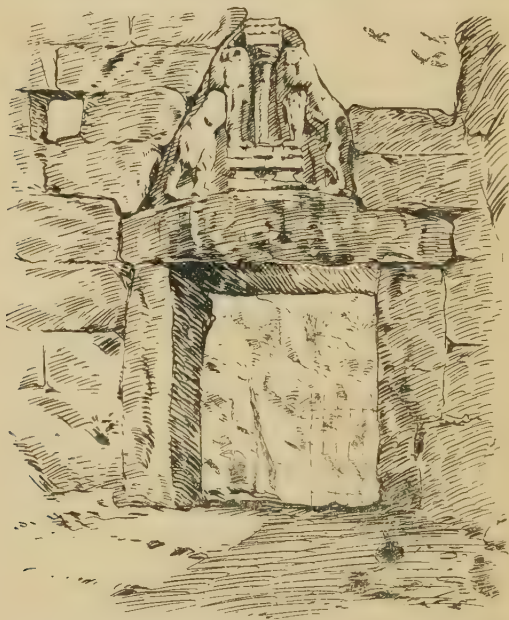


FIG. 101. The Lion Gate of Mycenæ. The only inhabitants of the fortress now are the kestrels nesting in the holes in the walls.

ground with the pits or shaft-graves from which Schliemann took the treasure, and picked up, literally, gold in small ornaments by handfuls. It looks somewhat as if there were more gold than taste, an overplus of wealth coming when the art was not strong and reticent enough to withstand ostentation, pride of possession. Somewhere about this time, Tutankhamen was laid to rest in his rocky cavern with a

similar over-use of the precious metal. As already remarked, the only use of gold for many centuries later than this period, was to make a brave show.

There is much to interest at Mycenæ. As at the neighbouring fortress of Tyrens, there is a subterranean corridor, the walls of great irregular blocks and the roof composed of inclined stones. This passage leads down to what may have been an underground cistern of a bee-hive shape. Outside the fortress walls are by far the most interesting remains of Mycenæ

—the bee-hive tombs—the finest being the so-called “Treasury of Atreus.” Passing through a “dromos,” or passage cut in the hillside, and walled with immense stones, one approaches a high doorway inclined above, the inner

lintel of which is a great stone weighing over a hundred tons. Above is a triangular recess similar to that over the Lion Gate, but in this case the filling slab has disappeared. On either side were grey alabaster columns, now in the British Museum, elaborately decorated with spirals and chevrons, producing an effect almost of Norman style. The spiral seems to have been the chief ornamental motive for carved stone work at this period. The whole front of this entrance was decorated probably with carved spirals. There are some fragments of the ornament in the British Museum. The ceiling of a great tomb at Orchomenos is covered with a spiral decoration. Passing within the doorway of the



FIG. 102. A gold ornament from Mycenæ—a stylised representation of the octopus. Compare with the naturalistic version in Fig. 100.

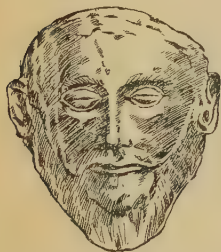


FIG. 103. A gold mask from one of the shaft-graves of Mycenæ. The modelling is inferior to that of the Egyptian work. The eyes are too close together and the whole treatment hard and wiry.

Mycenian tomb, one stands under a great dome fifty feet wide and tapering upwards beehive fashion. An electric torch reveals that the dome is formed of horizontal courses of masonry, the inner faces curved to form part of the general contour. Coming directly from the roughly

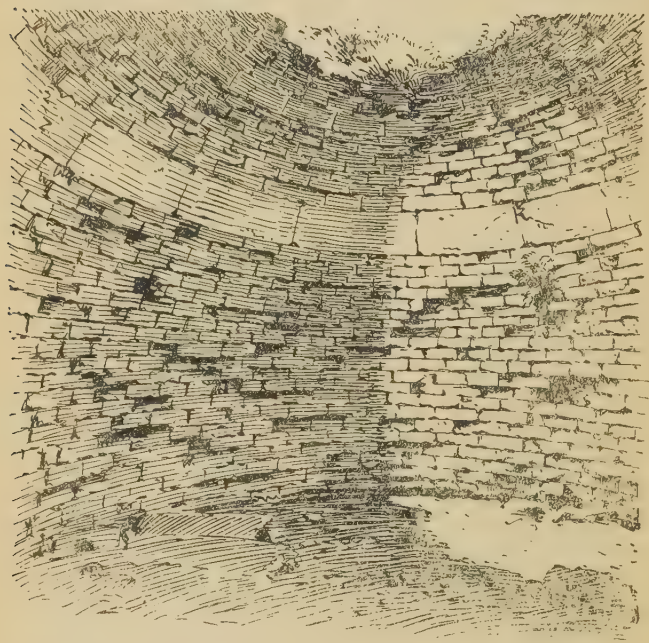


FIG. 104. A bee-hive dome, broken into from above.

built walling of the fortress, the eye is greatly impressed by the beauty and refinement of the curved surface. There are no straight lines, no columns, nothing but the suave hollow dome losing itself above in the gloom. Numerous holes betray that the masonry, fine as it is, was once covered with a casing, perhaps of metal, with rosettes at regular intervals. A small cell leads from the dome, and a great slab before the cell-opening testifies to funeral rites in connexion with the

burial. Indeed the domed space may have been a funerary chapel, answering to the Egyptian mastaba.

How was this tomb constructed, and the final capping stone deposited in its place? Another bee-hive tomb broken open above reveals the fact that the crown of the tomb was not much below the level of the ground (Fig. 104). A site was selected in sloping ground, and a great pit sunk to the required level. Then the dromos or passage entrance was cleared, and the dome erected *inside the pit*. As the courses were laid, the space between the wall of the pit and the outside of the dome was filled with earth, which the workers trod down as they laid the courses following. Thus they worked *outside* the dome and required no scaffolding. The coping-stone was dropped in, the earth was spread over it and all was lost to view, for probably the dromos itself was filled in after the funeral rites were completed.

The seafaring Ægeans whether of the islands or mainland, as we have said already, carried their wares to many Mediterranean countries. As late as Tutmose III, Ægeans are represented bringing vases and other wares to Thebes. In the Balearic Isles have been found bulls' heads remarkably like one from Mycenæ.

THE PHOENICIANS

AFTER Tutmose III there are no more pictures of belted Cretans bearing tribute to Thebes. Vases continued to arrive, but they were now carried by bearded men wearing long fringed garments. These may have been Phoenicians. Knossos had fallen, and Mycenæ and the mainland cities were continuing the art of the Late Ægean period. The Phoenicians, an ancient Semitic people occupying Cyprus and the strip of mainland opposite, who had for long been trading between east and west, took advantage of the bankruptcy of Crete to absorb her trade and plant ports and colonies throughout the Mediterranean, their ships even coming as far as Cornwall for the tin that turned soft copper into hard bronze. Traders and merchants as they were, they introduced a new phase into art; they commercialised it; they were shrewd enough to use it for profit. Up till then each nation made its wares in its own style; Egyptian jewellery for instance can be told from Babylonian, and the Cretan work was distinctive. The practical Phoenicians borrowed motives from the other nations, the sphinx and lotus from Egypt, the griffin and plaits from Babylonia, and used them to decorate the wares which they traded to the barbarians. They even used the Egyptian hieroglyphic writing as a decorative border, without understanding the meaning of the symbols (Fig. 105). They learned all they could from other nations and in the crafts of dyeing, glass-blowing, and metal-work, they improved on their teachers.

In later times, Ezekiel (Chapter XXVII) gave a vivid description of their various arts and industries, in which stress is laid on the famous dye obtained by the people of Tyre (and elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean) from the murex, a shell-fish. Great beds of the debris of the murex used by the ancient dyers, still lie at the foot of the cliff at Sidon.

When Solomon rebuilt the temple he called for the help

of his friend Hiram of Tyre, who sent him craftsmen, and materials such as cedar and dyed hangings. The Ark for instance owed its trappings to Assyrian motives as the doves, and the cherubim. The latter were the man-headed winged bulls, for a "kherub" was a monster, not an angel.



FIG. 105. Phoenician dish of silver, decorated with Egyptian motives.

Lastly, although we have decried Phoenician art, we must remember that she gave Europe, through Greece, a system of writing which she herself had derived from Egyptian and Babylonian sources. In addition, the Phoenicians made Greece acquainted with the products of Egypt and Asia if only at second hand, and thus helped her to rise from barbarism.



The painted decoration on this pre-dynastic Egyptian bowl of earthenware is an early example of the spiral, a form which did not become common in Europe until after 1000 B.C., that is thousands of years later.

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